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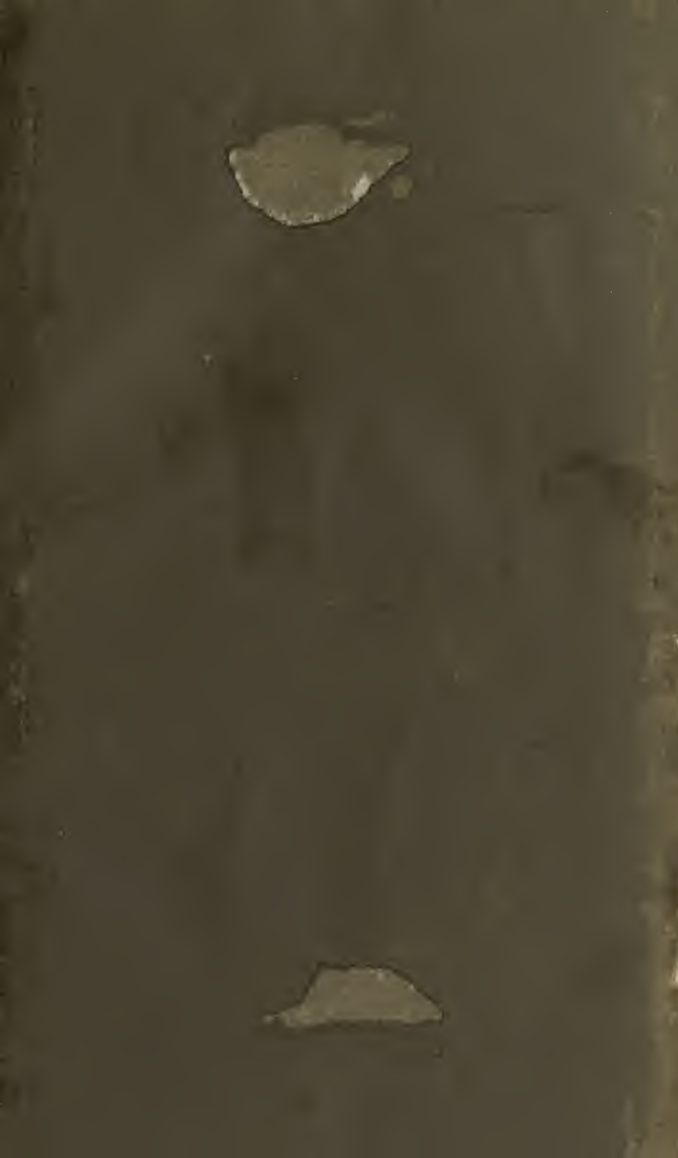
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THE
SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
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A RATIONAL AND SCRIPTURAL REVIEW

OF THE

SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM

OF THE

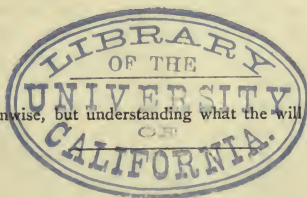
CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

SHOWING THE URGENT NECESSITY FOR

REFORM.

BY WILLIAM PURTON, M.A.

AUTHOR OF 'PHILOCALIA' ETC.



'Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the LORD is.'
EPH. V. 17.

LONDON :

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‘I could not in Church matters feel confidence to alter a straw, if I did not stand firm on a scriptural basis, and had not the conviction that the alteration or reform proposed was a higher development of the Divine religion of Christ, and therefore also a calling to a higher life than that which it might seem to abrogate or modify; and finally, if I was not convinced that the time is come when that institution or Church must either be reformed or perish, by that same Divine right which it justly claims for its existence. . . . But is the time come (for reform of Liturgy and Articles)? I believe the time is come, in so far as that the necessity is urgent, to consider the matter above and before anything else. This consideration will show that, independently of all expediency, there are internal reasons and arguments enough at hand to prove that the Liturgy may be more perfect, and that it must now be revised, because it offers the only means of bringing about a more glorious manifestation of Christian spirit and the reign of Christ than before. . . . Let me state explicitly, that a union with the Dissenters who worship Christ is what I bear in mind these fifteen years as to my own country and the Church in general. We must come to that if God will save us and our countries. It will take place *once* and somewhere on earth. Blessed the land and Church who effect it, who throw off the yoke of doctrine and ritual tyranny too long exercised by those who should be united in Christ, and who ought to believe in facts revealed and transmitted, not in words and abstractions and formulæ substituted or annexed to them.’

BUNSEN to ARNOLD, 1834.



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INTRODUCTION.



THERE are few, I think, except her ill-wishers, who can look with any degree of satisfaction on the present state or prospects of the Church of England. It has often been remarked, that the general attitude of the people towards her is one of indifference. This, perhaps, only shows that the questions which are so fiercely agitated by contending parties do not interest them; but the fact is indisputable. The noisy crowds which stand forth as partisans of this or that doctrine do not represent the people, or their feelings toward the Church; Churchmen, as a general rule, keep aloof, either caring for none of these things, or fondly hoping that they will right themselves. If this apathy continues, there will soon be no Church to care for. The House of Commons has passed an Act to do away with the Church establishment in one of the three united kingdoms; and had it passed the House

of Lords, I do not think there would remain a hope that a national Church could long be upheld in either of the other two. The strongest advocates for disestablishment, though they affect to smile at prophetic alarms, do not pretend to deny that the precedent would be fraught with danger; indeed, I never conversed with one who did not admit that a partial disestablishment must be only the beginning of the end; and the leaders of the extreme High Church party, chafing under the control of the State, announce, with apparent satisfaction, that the days of establishments are numbered.

It would be affectation in me to profess any very devoted loyalty to the Church—that loyalty which is blind to defects, and sees only perfection. On the contrary, my object is to show that she is overlaid with superstition and false doctrine; but not the less do I think that to remove her, without substituting something more perfect in her place, would be an unmitigated, irremediable evil. Thenceforward, there would be an end of all hope of a national reformation of religion.

The greatest mistake the Christian Church ever committed, and possibly the mistake was inevitable, was making a distinction between things civil and

things ecclesiastical, between the laws of the State and the laws of religion. Righteousness exalteth a nation; and what righteousness can there be in a Christian country apart from religion? Christ, we profess, is our righteousness: as well might Plato have excluded the word righteousness from his *Republic*, as can we, at our peril, exclude Christ and His laws from the government of a Christian State.

And here, once for all, I hesitate not to declare, that I hold the early, or ante-Nicene Church, as distinguished from the apostolic, to whose dictation in matters of faith such servile deference has so long been paid, in very low estimation for wisdom; such wisdom as is required for the well-ordering and progress of society, and for the spread of Christianity. If any one regards this as presumptuous self-sufficiency, let him read the account Mr. Isaac Taylor gives of this period in his *Ancient Christianity*. He will find a childish bondage to outward ordinances its most marked characteristic; scarcely a spark of manly vigour, or healthy morality anywhere apparent. St. Paul was, I believe, painfully conscious of this want of wisdom, of anything like a philosophic spirit in the infant Church, when he called his countrymen mere children, unskilful in the word of righteousness, resting in dead

ordinances. If we are to find the old paths, it must be not by the light of patristic theology, but by that of Christ and His apostles.

To abandon the Church is to abandon religion, to abandon righteousness as an element of government, and to fall back on worldly wisdom as our only stay. I believe it will be long ere the good sense of the people will consent to such a suicidal policy. The late vote of the House of Commons might well shake such confidence, were it not evident that the spirit of party had much to do with it ; and that none except nonconformists attempt to justify it on any higher ground than expediency. Those who so voted, believing that a national Church is a blessing, must have done so on the principle of doing evil that good may come. Still, things cannot go on as they are ; Dissent is on the increase, as is also the number of those who are only animated by the desire to throw down and despoil, and unless the Church by some means or other gets a stronger hold on the confidence and affection of the people, she will ‘pass away and cease to be.’

I know there are very many who think that there is no hope for her but in a searching reformation of doctrine and discipline ; but few are willing to incur the

odium of exposing the rottenness of her system. All the many parties into which she is divided revile each other as heterodox and unchristian; but say a word against her under whose wing they gather themselves, and you are at once attacked by all the loyal brood as an unbeliever and Antichrist. Still, great and good men have, from time to time, raised their voices for reform; none more powerfully than the late Dr. Arnold, one of the greatest and best. Of him, and of the late Dr. Marsh, representing opinions of a directly opposite character in the Church, it is recorded—‘Well were they agreed in the painful apprehension that in the nineteenth century the battle of the Reformation would have to be fought over again.’ (‘Memoir of Dr. Marsh.’) Professor Kingsley is also reported to have expressed his conviction, in a sermon preached at the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, that there must be another reformation. The prospect is, I confess, very remote, and it is perfectly hopeless to expect it to be promoted by ecclesiastical authority. The people must petition the throne and Parliament until they obtain it, and this they probably will not do until it is too late. These views will be called Erastian; as to which I am indifferent. They are the principles on which the Church of England was founded at the

Reformation: the outward and visible Church—that is, except as by law established—has no status in this kingdom. Separate her from the State, and there will remain only sects, ever increasing in number; the word *Church* will thenceforward be blotted out of the history of England.

A new State, like America, may in its wisdom resolve not to encumber itself with a Church or a throne; but where they are institutions already established, the State is as much bound to support one as the other, to define the duties and privileges of one as much as of the other, and to make reform where reform is necessary. It cannot cast off an integral element of the constitution, much less the religious element, without imperilling the whole. Many years ago, Mr. Isaac Taylor, having strongly insisted that the 'Oxford Tract' writers, by claiming 'the unalienable right of the Church to an uncontrolled internal government,' intended nothing less than the disruption of Church and State, uttered this warning:—
'With the clergy at large it must rest to be decided whether, by favouring an agitation that touches the principle of the Protestant establishment, they shall bring everything dear to them into peril—*the establishment itself first; then, the due influence of the aristocracy;*

and then, the denuded throne—or whether, by promptly withdrawing all support from these agitators, and by turning away their ear, they shall stave off awhile the most dire commotion, religious and political, that has ever convulsed this country.' (*Ancient Christianity*, vol. i. p. 13.) The same party in the Church is now combining with the democratic and antichurch party in the State to bring about this severance, and unless Protestant Churchmen exert themselves, the calamity here foretold will not be staved off for long. Such a reformation of the national Church as might bring back within its hold all who really value religion, as would exclude none who believe in the great Head of the Church Universal, and would submit themselves to the authority of the State (and such reform would in time be obtained, if the people would persevere in demanding it), would do more to avert civil commotion, and to establish order and intestine peace, than parliamentary reform, or any other panacea for the ills of the constitution.

If the question were once ably agitated, it would not be allowed to drop. Englishmen, when once made to understand what they want and have a right to, are not usually slack in demanding it. Such party Church questions as have been brought forward

in Parliament have not been regarded with indifference. How many petitions were sent to the last about *ritualism*! But what could be expected from legislation in this direction? To get rid of superstition and false doctrine by putting down ritualism, is about as possible as to cure a fever by driving in the eruption. Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good; it will serve no good purpose to pelt down the corrupt bad fruit with stones and brickbats. I am afraid it is only the hereditary hatred of Rome which has power thus to raise the Protestant Englishman from his constitutional apathy; hatred never helped any good cause, and in this case it is misdirected. Mr. Taylor has very clearly shown that the doctrines generally objected to as Romish, really belong to ante-Nicene Christianity. Baptismal regeneration and transubstantiation, especially (and it is with these that I combat), were fully developed before the Council of Nicæa. 'After we have set off,' he says, 'from the Nicene system the superhuman institute of celibacy, which could avail for only a few, *then*, and for the many, *this system was precisely what Popery has always been*—A RELIGION OF SACRAMENTS.' (*Ancient Christianity*, vol. i. p. 247.) In the early Church, celibacy or virginity, in all who could attain to

so exalted a virtue, and the crown of martyrdom, were held to supersede everything, even the sacraments, which were chiefly used as prophylactics or charms. Baptism was often reserved as a viaticum for the death-bed, and the consecrated elements were carried about the person, even by the unbaptized, to ward off evil, temporal and spiritual, or placed in the coffins of the dead for the same purpose. 'It is affirmed,' says Mr. Taylor, 'that whereas in the apostolical writings the spiritual stands foremost, and the ritual hindermost (where it appears at all), in the Nicene writings, on the contrary, whatever may be said about the spiritual, the ritual is so placed as to fix upon itself the most intense, if not the exclusive, regards of the people. And that this was the actual effect of this reversed order, is attested by the simple fact that the people did so interpret the Church doctrine as bearing upon their personal conduct; the more religious class taking the steep but certain road to heaven, through virginity and the ascetic discipline, while the many—the less devout, in all degrees, *down to the gross and sensual*—either secured their salvation within the Church, availing themselves carefully of all its customary remedies, or took a lodging just under the eaves

of it, and, as they hoped, within the reach of the one great remedy, when the worst should come.' (Id. id.)

It cannot, then, be safe to make anything taught or practised in the post-apostolic times of early Christianity our authority or exemplar respecting the sacraments ; yet this is what the Church of England does. She teaches baptismal regeneration, and the real presence, which is only transubstantiation disguised and mystified, in the Church catechism, and in the ministration of the sacraments. It is true, only a small section of the clergy even profess to believe in them, except with many reservations ; the majority fall back on the Articles, in which a protest is made against transubstantiation, or a real bodily presence, and baptismal regeneration is reduced to a dead letter. By some the Articles and Prayer-book are held to be consistent, on the theory that the efficacy of the sacraments depends on faith ; but, as a general rule, it is not attempted to reconcile them. One party says : We do not consider the Articles binding, they were not ordained by the Church but by Act of Parliament ; the other, on the authority of the sixth Article, We are not bound by the Prayer-book further than it can be proved by Scripture. My position is, that no grace or efficacy is promised to either sacrament. Of

course, I shall be declared heretical by both parties, though I do not see with what consistency, seeing that I am not wider apart from either than they are from each other. But, say that it is so, the verdict does not much disturb me. St. Paul says, 'There must needs be (it might have been translated—there ought to be) heresies, that the true doctrine may be made manifest.' Will any one affirm that it *is manifest*, as regards the sacraments of the Church of England?

The high sacramental system and the priest system are necessarily the same of which Dr. Arnold said, 'That the Church system, or rather the priest system, is not to be found in Scripture, is as certain as that the worship of Jupiter is not the doctrine of the Gospel. That the great enemy should have turned his very defeat into his greatest victory, and have converted the spiritual self-sacrifice (explained above in the spiritual sacrifice of each man's self to God) into the carnal and lying sacrifice of the mass, is, to my mind, more than anything else, the exact fulfilment of the apostolical language concerning Antichrist. Now that the two systems are set front to front, I do not think a middle course is possible ; the priest is either Christ or Antichrist. He is either our mediator, or he is like the man of sin in God's temple. The Church system is

either our gospel, and St. John's and St. Paul's gospel is superseded by it, or it is a system of blasphemous falsehood, such as St. Paul foretold was to come, such as St. John saw already in the world.' This is a quotation from a private letter : the language would probably have been more measured had it been intended for publication.

As we bring to light the unscripturalness of this system, the apostolic doctrine of the sacraments will appear at once more spiritual, more conducive to holiness, than that which ascribes grace and efficacy to outward and visible ordinances ; and I think the ministers of Christ who truly appreciate the dignity of their position, must perceive that this dignity is not impaired by refusing them possession of any miraculous power in the administration of these ordinances. To do so is to remove them from the same category with the heathen priest, and the mystery or medicine man of the savage, the prestige of whose power is superstitious fear. That the clergy, from a very early period, sought and cherished this power is beyond dispute ; and, in times of violence and oppression, they used it on the whole for the good of mankind. Not the less had it a most damaging effect on the character of the Church. Priestly arrogance became

a byeword, and she forgot what spirit she was of. Even at the present day, and in our own Church, spiritual obedience is often insisted upon, and we are reminded that we ought to 'obey those that have the rule over you,' though St. Paul's words do not admit of this overbearing interpretation, but simply mean, 'follow those who would lead you,' who watch for your souls, your guides not rulers, your servants for Christ's sake.

If a case is made out against this power, if it be shown that the clergy are not priests to offer sacrifice, nor the medium through which miraculous gifts are conveyed in the sacraments, a pressing necessity for reformation of doctrine will be established. I would not, however, for a moment have it supposed that reform is wanted in this direction only. The object of Mr. Taylor's *Ancient Christianity* was to point out the danger of making the Nicene Church our court of appeal in matters of faith ; he passes the severest condemnation on its teaching respecting the sacraments, which, allowing for the superstitious credulity of the times, is virtually the same as the teaching of our catechism ; and yet he says, in his dedicatory letter to Archdeacon Monsell, 'British Protestantism, or, let us say, British Christianity,

stands on a rock clear of all exception, and, so far as relates to Popery, is exempted from peril.' I can only suppose that he founds this confidence on the Articles, and overrules the sacramental system by what he calls the grand Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. If so, I think he is inconsistent. Justification by faith is as much a doctrine of the Nicene Church as transubstantiation ; that is, if Augustine is to be reckoned amongst the Nicene fathers. He taught it—taught it, as I conceive, less offensively than Calvin—and it is as much a doctrine of the Romish as of the Anglican Church.

I have, in a former work, endeavoured to refute this doctrine, which I think is a misinterpretation of St. Paul's. It turns on the meaning of the word *δικαίωσις* which is not *standing righteous*, as in the sight of God, but the process of being *made righteous*, which we are by faith in God. In this view I am supported by many able writers, especially Dr. Bushnell, in his 'Vicarious Sacrifice.' He translates the word *righteous-ing*, or being righteoused. Augustine's is so far a Protestant doctrine, that it was made to do good service at the Reformation, as opposed to the impious system of penances, pardons, indulgences, &c., which was then the process of righteousing in the Church of

Rome; but it is not the less an error, and has undoubtedly been the source of fanatical immorality and profligacy not a whit less atrocious than that of the ascetic and monastic systems which Mr. Taylor so mercilessly exposes.

Perhaps the greatest error committed by the Nicene Church (and this again, I believe, was forced upon them by stern necessity) was instituting the system of creed—substituting belief for faith; belief in dogmas for faith in God and Christ. Orthodoxy took the place of righteousness, and a belief in things far above human comprehension, which no man can tell whether he believes or not, and to dogmatize on which is presumptuous, was declared necessary to salvation. Mr. Taylor, reviewing the *Commonitorium* of Vincent of Lerins, remarks:—‘The whole of this criterion of doctrine turns upon the perfection of Trinitarianism; not a hint is dropped anywhere that there are other principles necessary to Christianity, after the Nicene faith has been duly secured. A reader of this tract is left to suppose that if he do but hold the doctrine of the Trinity “incorrupt and entire,” nothing is wanting in him—he is within the pale of the Church, and as safe as all are on board a ship which is destined to reach her port. An orthodoxy purely logical, and

which turns upon nicely-trimmed phrases, came in the place of the entire Christianity of the apostolic writings.' (*Ancient Christianity*, vol. i. p. 193.) And such, as far as it had the power, the Church decreed Christianity was ever to continue throughout all ages. As Christ said of the Jewish lawyers, the Nicene fathers did all they could to lock the door of knowledge and throw away the key; they did not enter in themselves, and them that would have entered in they hindered. I am not railing at theology or the fathers; they did what they could, thinking they were doing God service, and St. Paul, the greatest of theologians, could do no more. Not the less were they false teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing, who have scattered the sheep—scattered by striving to make them prisoners. 'Where the Spirit of Christ is there is liberty.' In many directions, then, there is a wide field open for reformation of Church doctrine which still rests wholly, or nearly so, on the rotten foundation of Nicene theology. Even our Articles accept its creeds, which affirm, that except a man believe, not in Christ, but 'in an orthodoxy purely logical, and which turns upon nicely-trimmed phrases,' *he cannot be saved.*

Had our partially reformed Church been content to

read theology, as did St. Paul, 'according to the wisdom which God gave her,' instead of through the spectacles of effete orthodoxy, a larger measure of truth might ere this have been vouchsafed to her, and she might not have been torn and divided as she has been. But this was not in the counsels of God; she was not prepared for it; and He only knows when, if ever, she will be. Humanly speaking, reformation can only be effected by authority, and should the Church be separated from the control of the State, the next reformation will be for other nations to bring about; there may be reformation in England, but not of the Church of England.

It is in vain to look to the hierarchy to make the first step. Nearly a century ago, indeed, an eminent prelate, the author of the *Apology for the Bible*, published *Considerations on the Expediency of Revising the Liturgy and Articles of the Church of England*. I know not what reform he suggested, but I think to him is ascribed a very liberal reading of the conclusion of the nineteenth Article—'As the Church of Hierusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome have erred, so also the *Church of England* hath erred, not only in their living, and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.' I am not aware that any movement towards

reform has since been made from the episcopal bench, and such as have come from other clerical or lay members of the Church, even as to the alteration of a word in the liturgy or the Articles of subscription, have been met with an outcry of alarm. Once open the door!—the door of knowledge must not be unlocked, or heresy may creep in. Surely this is nothing else than cowardice and want of faith—of faith in God and truth—of faith in Christ's words: 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'

I have selected the sacraments of the Church of England for discussion, because I believe they have caused more strife and dissension amongst her members and more frequent secessions from her pale, than anything else. So far has the sacramental system, as it is called, failed in establishing one communion and fellowship amongst us. My object is to prove this system, as taught in our formularies, unscriptural, cherishing a hope that I shall at the same time present the true scriptural doctrine, though conscious of understanding it very imperfectly, in such favourable contrast to it, as must give it the preference in the estimation of those who are earnestly seeking for the paths of pure and undefiled religion, seeking to heal divisions, and endeavouring, according to their power,

to spread abroad the gospel of salvation. Of course, wherever I have here used the word *Church*, I mean the outward and visible, the national Church. The members of the true, the invisible Church, the spiritual members of Christ's body, are, doubtless, dispersed through all nations, and churches and sects, known to God only, who is no respecter of persons, or of churches ; but in every nation, he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him. Of this visible Church, that which we fondly call the pure and apostolical branch, planted in these realms, was planted by the State. If, instead of being pure and apostolical, it is proved corrupt and Nicene, it surely were a worthier aim for statesmen and Churchmen to try to make it good, that its fruit may be good, than to adopt the easier alternative of cutting it down, as the House of Commons, under its chivalrous leader, has shown itself so ready to do.

January 1869.



SACRAMENTS.

BEFORE CONSIDERING the two sacraments of our Church, I wish to say a few words on sacraments in general, not with the vain hope or expectation of determining what a sacrament is, for I am satisfied that the term has been arbitrarily applied by theology to certain ordinances which have nothing in common which appertains to them exclusively. But before inquiring what the original meaning of the word was, and the different senses in which it has been used by the Church, it will be more convenient to consider that which is given to it by the Church of England. The definition of a sacrament in our Church Catechism (which I need not transcribe), seems expressly worded to exclude all others, except baptism and the Lord's Supper. It is not denied that there are other sacraments, but these only are said to be *generally necessary to salvation*. To give a general description or definition intended to apply to two only, these two differing widely in many respects from each other, would not be an easy task; and it certainly has not been

successfully accomplished, as the following inconsistencies and anomalies will testify.

A sacrament is said to be *an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace* : the outward sign in baptism is *water* ; the inward grace, *a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness* ; whilst in the Lord's Supper, *bread and wine* are made the sign, not of the inward graces, but of *the body and blood* of Christ, the *strengthening and refreshing of our souls* corresponding with the spiritual grace of the other sacrament. So that there are two parts in the one, and three in the other. The outward washing of water should have been made the sign of the inward purifying of the Spirit, as St. Paul makes it : 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.'¹ Here the sign is a lively image of the thing signified ; but it is not easy to recognise in the washing of water a sign of a death or a birth, much less of both.

To make the work of God in the soul part of any sacrament, appears to me presumptuous. It has been done in order to isolate these sacraments from all others, and the necessary result has been confusion : thus a sacrament is said to be '*given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself as a means whereby we receive the*

¹ Heb. x. 22-23.

same and a pledge to assure us thereof. By this, I suppose, we must understand that the outward sign is the means whereby we receive the inward and spiritual grace; but then it follows that the outward sign only is ordained by Christ. This is in fact true, but this is not what is intended ; the sign is the ordinance, of which that which it signifies cannot be a part

Baptism is essentially different from the Lord's Supper, in that it is a covenant, or, rather, the initiatory rite of the new covenant, as circumcision was of the old ; thus St. Paul says, ' Abraham received the covenant of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith.'¹ The word here translated *covenant*—διαθήκη—is in our version almost as frequently rendered *testament*, without any apparent reason for the interchange. Thus the two volumes of Scripture are called the Old and New *Testaments* ; whilst, in St. Paul's allegory, the Jewish and Christian Churches or dispensations are the two *covenants*. Much confusion of ideas must, under any circumstances, arise from translating the same word by two of such different signification ; what, then, must it be when we are told that the Greek word, though it may mean a will or testament, never means a covenant, and that the Hebrew word, of which it is a translation, never means a testament ? This is asserted by Mr. Perowne, in an [article

¹ Rom. iv. 11.

‘Covenant,’ in Smith’s ‘Bible Dictionary:’ who says of *testament*, ‘there seems to be no necessity for the introduction of a new word conveying a new idea;’ of *covenant*, ‘in its Biblical meaning, of a compact or agreement between two parties, the word is used *improperly* of a covenant between God and man. Man not being in any way in the position of an independent covenanting party, the phrase is evidently used by way of accommodation.’ St. Paul, Heb. ix. 16, enters more fully into the nature of such a covenant—or testament, as our version renders it—than elsewhere. It is on the strength of this passage that the word testament chiefly rests. ‘Where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of the testator,’ &c. Mr. Perowne says that here ‘the word *διαθήκη* has been thought by many commentators absolutely to require the meaning of *will* or *testament*.’ He brings forward several objections to such rendering; and, after one or two suggestions towards a solution of the difficulty, he adds, ‘or we may (with Ebrard and others) restrict the statement at verse 16 to the Old Testament idea of a covenant between man and God, in which man, as guilty, must always be represented by a sacrifice, with which he was so completely identified, that *in its person*, he (*ὁ διαθέμενος*, the human covenanter) actually died.’ This is everywhere St. Paul’s idea of baptism. Of the baptized, he says, ‘ye are dead,’ ‘buried with Christ.’ An

entire sacrifice of ourselves unto Christ is professed. In accordance with this idea we may read the passage thus—‘Where a covenant is, it is of necessity that the death of the covenanter be brought about or offered (φέρεισθαι). For a covenant is of force in the dead, seeing it is of no force whilst the covenanter liveth.’ As a general rule, a new covenant disannuls that which preceded it ; as St. Paul says, the priesthood of Aaron was done away by that of Christ.¹ Accordingly, he contends that Christ was of the priesthood of Melchisedec ; ‘not after the letter of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.’ For the same reason, he argues that the promise of salvation was not made to Abraham individually, but to Abraham and his seed—that is, Christ. There seems no difficulty or impropriety, therefore, in recognising in the man Christ Jesus the seed of Abraham, the covenanter of the circumcision, which covenant was disannulled at his death, and superseded by the Gospel dispensation.² And thus, in the verse preceding the passage we are considering, St. Paul, after contrasting the old and new covenants, and the efficacy of the blood of Christ as compared with that of bulls and goats, says, ‘For this cause He is the mediator of the new covenant, that *by means of death* for the redemption of the transgressions that were

¹ Heb. vii. 18.

² Rom. xv. 8.

under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.’¹ By the death of the mediator of the covenant, or covenanter, the promise is confirmed to all who are called redeemed in Him.

We may thus understand St. Paul’s meaning as regards this covenant—that it is of force in the dead, that it is confirmed to Christ and to all who are in Him ; as he says again, ‘if one died for all, then were all dead ;’ but how does it apply to covenants generally ? To answer this question, we must ascertain more accurately what is the force of the Greek word translated *covenant*. The translators of the Septuagint, who had no preconceived opinions to contend with, would naturally give a word as nearly equivalent as was possible ; and that the writers of the New Testament adopted it, is evidence that they were not far wrong. Mr. Perowne says it does not mean a covenant between two parties, which is *συνθήκη* ; but St. Paul applies it to compacts amongst men. He says, where a covenant is established by man, no one detracts from or adds to it.² I think the difference between the two words is this—that *συνθήκη* means a compact entered into between two parties on mutual terms of agreement, whilst *διαθήκη* is of the nature of a charter or corporation, into the privileges of which

¹ Heb. ix. 15.

² Gal. iii. 15.

members are admitted on certain conditions. These conditions involve a change in the status or being, and, by a common metaphor, the old man is said to be put to death by the new. The covenant of marriage, frequently used in illustration by St. Paul, is not simply an agreement between two persons, but an admission into a holy state, the conditions of which are imposed by divine authority. In this covenant, the single individual life of each person admitted is ended, till death again frees the survivor from the covenant. So in baptism ; the old carnal man is to be put to death—crucified with Christ—that the new man may be raised up with Him.

How close is the analogy between this idea of the Christian life, as a constant dying to sin and rising again to righteousness, with a great and good man's conception of death ! Bunsen, in a letter to Brandis, says, ' that death is the awakening of the soul to a higher life, is my innermost conviction.'¹ How beautifully, too, does Bunsen describe this life from a sermon of his friend Schnieder, as ' faith in Christ, who, living *in us*, must be the death of the old man, in order that the soul, having suffered with Christ-Man, shall rise again with Christ-God, and expand into a new life.'² I don't vouch for the correctness of the distinction which here seems to be drawn

¹ *Memoirs of Bunsen*, vol. i. p. 112.

² *Ibid.* p. 112.

between Christ-Man and Christ-God. St. Paul says, 'He that descended is the same also that ascended.'¹ I quote the passage to show that St. Paul's metaphor of a death unto sin was fully understood by Bunsen and his pastor. It is equally clear that it has not been understood by English critics and commentators; or they would not have found such insuperable difficulty in some passages in St. Paul's writings. Thus, when he indignantly asks, 'What will they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?' they cannot understand him, though he plainly intimates that he was himself so baptized. He declares what he should do, were this his belief; he says he should enjoy more of the good things of this life. Why should he fight with wild beasts, or fight with anything? 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'² Again, though he here protests that he dies daily, they are quite at a loss for his meaning when, in another letter, he says, that he willingly suffers the loss of all things, 'if, by any means, he might attain to the resurrection of the dead;' although he fully explains that this is, 'to know Christ, and the power of His resurrection, being made *conformable to His death*.'³ It seems to me to have been very imperfectly understood by the framers of our Catechism. The inward grace of baptism is said to be a death

¹ Eph. iv. 10.

² 1 Cor. xv. 19.

³ Phil. iii. 10-11.

unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, *for* (or because) being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace. Two metaphors—the death *unto* sin, and the death *in* sin are here mixed up together; the former of which St. Paul is ever longing for, and striving to attain unto; from the other he exclaims, ‘Who shall deliver me?’ It may be that the new life or resurrection from either is practically the same thing; but unless we keep the two ideas distinct, we shall never understand St. Paul’s teaching on baptism.

The Lord’s Supper is not a covenant—certainly not, according to the conditions which St. Paul ascribes to one—nor is it easy to understand how it is brought into the same category with baptism as a sacrament. The Latin word *sacramentum* originally meant a vow, pledge, or oath, on entering into a compact, or act of self-dedication, as of soldiers. It is so nearly equivalent to the Greek *διαθήκη*, that one would naturally suppose that it was used to translate it; but this, it appears, was not the case. It was first used, and is still used in the Latin Vulgate, for another Greek word of very frequent occurrence in the New Testament—*μυστήριον*, *mystery*—a word which, it will scarcely be contended, is ever applied to baptism or the Lord’s Supper. I know St. Paul’s expression, ‘*stewards of the mysteries of God*,’¹ is often quoted as

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 1.

having reference to the sacraments especially, but it is much more probable that he had in mind the words of our Lord when He explained His parables to His disciples, 'To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.'¹ After the Church attached a mysterious and supernatural efficacy to these ordinances, the term mysteries was naturally applied to them, but that, in a theological sense, it should be reserved for these only, whilst it is given in the New Testament to many other high doctrines and sacred things, is in itself a mystery which I shall not attempt to explain ; neither shall I trouble myself to find out the date of its appearance.

The restricted meaning once established, the Reformed Churches did well in limiting the number to those ordained by Christ himself ; but you cannot by giving the two ordinances the same name, give them the same character. Baptism is called the new covenant, in the same sense that circumcision was the old, whilst the Lord's Supper and the Passover are purely commemorative. Baptism is, however, only the outward sign and seal ; the covenant, into which it admits outwardly, was made with Christ, and we are only admitted inwardly, by dying unto sin with Him. But our Church makes the outward ceremony a covenant with God in Christ. It declares what Christ has promised and will perform, and requires of

¹ Matt. xiii. 11.

the candidate, on his part, a solemn vow, promise, and profession, from which an Apostle would have shrunk—no less than a vow to be perfect. For this I not only think that there is no authority in Scripture, but that it contravenes St. Paul's doctrine of a death unto sin in baptism, and the covenant confirmed by the death of Christ. Our Church also virtually declares the Lord's Supper a covenant; she teaches that Christ has promised to be miraculously present in the flesh, whenever it is duly administered: for this also I shall have to show that there is no authority.

Outward ceremony or ritual corresponds with what St. Paul calls *the letter*—the letter of the commandment. Thus, he says, the true Melchisedec was ordained our High Priest, 'not after the letter of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.' And of himself and his brethren in the ministry, he says: 'Though insufficient in ourselves, God has made us sufficient to be ministers of the new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit, for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.'¹ The letter must, I think, here mean the rite of baptism. If there were then a ritual of ordination it would not be called the new covenant, nor could it be said to kill—to put to death one baptized into that covenant. The rite of baptism, the letter, declares he is dead; it cannot give life—that is the work of the spirit.

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 6.

The word *sign*, the outward and visible sign, is used in our Catechism as arbitrarily as the word sacrament. I need not remind the reader how innumerable are the things and objects which are said to be signs in Holy Scripture. The word is doubtless used in more than one sense ; but that of the Catechism, an outward and visible emblem of something invisible and spiritual, is perhaps the most common. Miracles are emphatically said to be signs, and in the miracles of Christ, the thing signified is as easily understood as in His parables. To make the sign the vehicle or means of conveying the grace, completely changes its character. It may be that all mysteries, sacraments, or sacred things, have their counterparts in the visible works of God. St. Paul says, ‘ the invisible things of Him, even His eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.’ Miraculous powers, *δυνάμεις*, are beginning to be regarded as possibly as much in the order of God’s providence as the powers of nature which science is able, at least partly, to apprehend.

The Duke of Argyle, who has so ably written on universal law, and who, it is to be hoped, will fulfil his original intention of applying it to theology, remarks : ‘ Perhaps it is not too much to say, that the manifest decay which so many creeds and confessions

¹ Rom. i. 20.

are now suffering, arises mainly from the degree in which at least the popular expositions of them dissociate the doctrines of Christianity from the analogy and course of nature. There is no such severance in Scripture—no shyness of illustrating divine things by reference to the natural. On the contrary, we are perpetually reminded that the laws of the spiritual world are in the highest sense laws of nature, whose obligation, operation, and effect, are all in the constitution and course of things.’¹ Many years ago, when writing on *Natural Beauty*, not dreaming that I should ever write on the sacraments, in tracing the operation of the energizing elements, air, water, and fire, on the *dust of the earth* or inert matters, producing beauty and harmony, I was much struck with the fact, that to each of these elements a baptismal office was assigned in Scripture—baptism by water, by the Spirit, and by fire.’² I will only add that, as I understand them, the outward and visible signs of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, represent invisible and spiritual things in beautiful analogy, whilst the interpretation which has been put upon them is as repugnant to reason and experience as to sense and instinct.

¹ *Reign of Law*, chap. i. p. 50.

² *Philocalia*, pt. i. p. 35.

BAPTISM.

I SHALL, in the examination of this sacrament, confine myself to the teaching of the Prayer Book. That of the Articles is, for the most part, negative; if they teach anything, it is in a very confused and fragmentary manner, beside which, they are not taught to the people at large. They ascribe a certain efficacy to the sacraments, on the condition of faith, which I do not recognise; but the Catechism, in which all are taught, and the ministration of baptism, of which all partake, go so much further in this direction, and are so much more definite and tangible, that I propose to deal with them only. I shall, indeed, have little to remark on the teaching of the Catechism. Circumstances not allowing that it should be supported by scriptural authority, it would be to little purpose to attempt to disprove its dogmas. Nothing, at first sight, can appear more explicit than the manner in which it asserts regeneration, or a new birth, in baptism. The first thing which a child is taught is, that in baptism he was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an

inheritor of the kingdom of heaven ; and it is declared that baptism signifies a death unto sin, a new birth unto righteousness ; that being by nature born in sin and a child of wrath, he was thereby made a child of grace. This, his unconditional profession, is, however, to a great extent, nullified by what follows. Two things are said to be required in a person to be baptized—repentance, whereby he forsakes sin, and faith whereby he steadfastly believes the promises of God made to him in the sacrament. That is, as I understand it, the effusion of the Holy Spirit depends upon the presence of these in the candidate or his sponsors ; or, as I have heard it explained, in all the parties engaged : in the candidate or his sponsors, his parents, the priest, and the congregation. In infant baptism, granted for the sake of argument that a promise is given, we may believe that it is fulfilled to the prayer of faith ; but how stands the case with an adult ? Can he attain to repentance and faith without the Spirit of God ? If so, where the necessity for baptismal regeneration ? A man *can* see the kingdom of God, before he is born of water and the Spirit.

And yet our Church follows the Nicene in making it for the time nothing less than complete salvation. As thus : ‘ It is certain by God’s Word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.’ This is the exact counterpart of the belief of the early Church, that men, whatever

lives they had led, dying before they committed sin after baptism, were undoubtedly saved. Granted the premises, and the one deduction is as legitimate as the other. This miserable casuistry arises from low and sordid views of salvation, as though to escape hell-fire were all a Christian had to do. Regeneration is in effect salvation, but this, according to St. Paul, is dying daily unto sin, and rising again unto righteousness.

We will now turn to the Baptismal Services, in which there is at least a show of authority for the doctrines of the Church. The new birth is here more plainly asserted than in the Catechism. All are declared after immersion or sprinkling to be regenerate: the chief, I might almost say the only foundation, on which this is made to rest, is the memorable discourse between our Saviour and Nicodemus. 'Our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the kingdom of God except he be regenerate and born again of water and the Holy Ghost.' Now it is a question whether this conversation refers to baptism at all. Many authorities—amongst them Bishop Jeremy Taylor—might be adduced, who hold that it does not, nor is it easy to understand how it possibly could. The words *born again* are a mis-translation; they should be, *born from above*, as is pointed out in the margin, nor can they be twisted in any way into *born again*. There is, in fact, no pretext for connecting the conversation with baptism, except the words *born of water*. We will follow the narrative

step by step; but I have a preliminary remark to make on this discourse, which applies also to two others closely connected with it—that with the woman of Samaria on *the water of life*, and that with the Jews at the Sea of Galilee on *the bread of life*. All three are, as I read them, on the same subject; all are recorded by St. John, and by St. John only. The remark is this: that they were addressed, not to His disciples, but to strangers who came to Him from different unworthy motives, to whom He said it was his wont to speak in parables, that seeing they might see and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not understand. His first recorded parable, which called forth this declaration, was moreover on the same subject as these three discourses—that is, on regeneration or the Christian life. Two of these discourses cannot refer to baptism, and its connection with the other is only imaginary. We may then expect, under the circumstances of their delivery, that they would be to a certain extent mysterious and enigmatical, but that they would contain nothing which Christ did not teach at other times to His disciples, if not ‘plainly and without a parable,’ as plainly as the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven could be made known to them.

As regards the first of these discourses, that with Nicodemus, it is so badly translated in our version that the scope and tendency of it is entirely lost. To begin, there is no connection between the address of Nico-

demus, and the reply of our Lord, the latter appearing to propose incidentally a subject for discussion—the necessity of a new birth. Yet how closely are they connected in the original ! Nicodemus professes his belief that Jesus must have come from God: ‘No one, he says, ‘could do the miracles which Thou doest *unless* God were with him.’ Christ takes up his very words—a man cannot see the kingdom of God *unless* he is born from above, unless God be with him. This is the sum and substance of all that part of the conversation with which we have to do. There is nothing in it which He did not teach more plainly on other occasions. ‘He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.’¹ The only excuse for the translation *born again* is, that Nicodemus seems to have so understood the metaphor; but this is an unnecessary supposition, and very improbable. His objection may imply no more than this—If a man must be born with a capacity to see the things of God, it is too late to talk about it; I cannot be born again. To this our Saviour replies. ‘Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ I did not say that you must be born again, but that you must have a spiritual as well as a natural birth. ‘That

¹ John viii. 47.

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which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' In the corresponding conversation with the woman of Samaria, to be born of water, certainly does not mean of the water of baptism. 'He that drinketh of the water that I will give him will never thirst;—it will be in him a well of water *springing up into everlasting life*.'¹ Can any one doubt that this is the same figure as born of water? or that, under another metaphor, He is speaking of the same thing where He says, 'I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me will never hunger; and he that believeth on Me will never thirst.'² It will be objected that in both these instances our Lord is evidently speaking of spiritual life; and so He is; but is He not also as evidently speaking of the natural life? That which is born of the flesh is in this last discourse the primary idea; the conclusion to be drawn is, that the two are inseparable—we cannot have the Spirit without the flesh—and that both are derived from Christ, as he says a little further on: 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you;' there is no life, natural or spiritual, which is not derived from Him.

But we must return to the discourse with Nicodemus. What follows is so evidently mistranslated in our version, and so entirely destroys the sense, that I must

¹ John iv. 14.

² John vi. 35.

attempt to give it more correctly. Christ continues : ‘ Marvel not I said unto thee, ye must be born from above; the Spirit breathes where It listeth, and thou hearest Its voice, but canst not tell whence It cometh, and whither It goeth; so is it (at least) with every one who is born of the Spirit.’ They only who are born from above hear the voice of the Spirit—not the sound of the wind. Πνεῦμα never means the wind, which in the New Testament is always ἄνεμος: the wind moreover does not blow where it listeth. Nicodemus then asks, ‘ How can these things be ?’ To which Christ replies—‘ Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?’—knowest not that only the Spirit of God discerneth the things of God? What was there to call for any reproach if He were speaking of the sacrament of baptism, not then instituted? Regarding it in this light, the author of *Ecce Homo* concisely and graphically gives the whole issue: ‘ He shut the petitioner’s mouth by an abrupt declaration that there was no way into the theocracy but through baptism.’¹

This is the only direct reference to Scripture in the baptism of infants that at all bears upon the question of regeneration as *then* taking place; nor do I know where we are to look for them. There are many passages which, if the doctrine were plainly taught, might be adduced in support of it, but there is nothing

¹ *Ecce Homo*, p. 85.

which is ever pointed to as initiating it. The flood, and the passage of the Red Sea, are made types of baptism. In both, a way of escape was offered, but in neither was there any washing of water, or any change in the condition of those saved. The apostles hold them forth as warnings not to neglect the salvation offered through baptism. St. Peter says, indeed, that baptism now saves us: that is, as the ark saved those who entered by faith, so all who passed through the sea were saved from Pharaoh; but with many of them God was not well pleased, and they perished through unbelief in the wilderness. Our Saviour's words when instituting the sacrament are referred to in the office of Baptism for Adults, but they are more against than for the doctrine of the Church, as implying that faith should precede the rite. I shall have to recur to them again. There is, I think, nothing else adduced from Scripture in support of baptismal regeneration which demands notice; the baptism of our Saviour is referred to as sanctifying water to the mystical washing away of sin: what is meant, I do not pretend to understand, nor will I discuss it.

There is one argument for this doctrine sometimes used, which would have some force if it were borne out by the facts of the case. It is said that as miraculous gifts followed upon baptism, we may infer that the ordinary gifts of the Spirit, as they are called, would be then bestowed. But in the instances relied on, it

was upon the laying on of the hands of the apostles, in some cases long after baptism, that this power was given. In the house of Cornelius it was imparted to the Gentile converts before baptism. Though a narrative is given of several baptisms in the New Testament, I think there is no instance in which miraculous power accompanied it, nor do I know of any promise that any spiritual grace or miraculous power would attend it, much less be an integral part of it.

We will now attempt to form some idea what meaning is attached to the word regeneration (*παλιγγενεσία*) in the New Testament. The word only occurs twice. Our Saviour refers *the regeneration* to the time when He will sit on the throne of His glory;¹ as though only then complete; and St. Paul once speaks of it as the perfect work of Christ, Who '*has saved us*, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.'² It is difficult to connect this in any way with regeneration in baptism; it speaks of what has been done by our Saviour, and makes regeneration the agent, not anything which is effected *in us*. I don't think the adverb *πάλιν* (again) is ever used to express the new birth of the Spirit. That commonly used is *ἀνὰ* (sursum) which does not to me convey the idea of a work completed, but pro-

¹ Matt. xix. 28.

² Tit. iii. 5.

gressing, rising upwards towards perfection. This may be fanciful, and is not important, as the word used with it, translated *born*, has so many other meanings, and in our version is arbitrarily rendered by so many words as to make it impossible to understand by it any particular epoch or crisis in our lives. 'Αναγιγόμενος (born again) is more frequently translated *begotten again*; γίνομαι to be born, more frequently to become. Sometimes it has both renderings in the same sentence. 'As many as received Him, to them gave He power to *become* the sons of God, who were *born*,' &c.;¹ and there is one passage, which one would have thought might have saved any one who read it in the Greek from adopting the interpretation which theology has put on the words addressed by our Saviour to Nicodemus. He said the same thing in the same words to His own disciples, where it is impossible there could be any reference to baptism: 'Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and be *born* as little children, ye will not enter the kingdom of heaven.'²

Can there be any reasonable doubt that, to be born from above, and to be born as little children before we can enter the kingdom of heaven, mean the same thing? If so, conversion must precede it, we must be turned—not merely receive the germ of spiritual life

¹ John i. 12.

² Matt. xviii. 3.

at baptism. Conversion and regeneration advance together—death to sin, life to righteousness. Metaphors too numerous to recall, precisely to the same effect, constantly occur quite unconnected with the idea of birth. Our Saviour's oft-repeated simile of the springing of the seed in the heart, by successive growths, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn. Then we read of the *renewing* of the Holy Ghost : *created* in Christ Jesus :—a *new creature* :—Christ *formed in you*, &c. &c. All this is regeneration, but it is not the work of baptism. I will not, however, argue the question further, but will proceed to the consideration of what St. Paul teaches concerning baptism, he being the only writer of the New Testament who enters into the question at any length.

Had the others attached that importance to the outward rite which the Church has since, they would not have been so reticent. He could not have attached more to it than they did, and yet I think that without his writings the doctrine of baptismal regeneration would not have been invented. The idea which everywhere presents itself in his epistles is, that Christians are baptized into the death of Christ ; that they are dead with Him unto sin, live with Him unto righteousness—in a word, that they are *perfect* in Him. We have the best authority for believing that some of St. Paul's high, transcendental doctrines were not understood, and gave offence from the first ; and that this

doctrine of Christian perfection was one of them. St. Peter says that there are in his epistles, written according to the wisdom given unto him—given unto him above others—some things hard to be understood, which they that are *unlearned* and unstable wrest to their own destruction, or grievous loss.¹ And what is it which suggests this reflection? He is exhorting his readers: ‘Be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, *without spot and blameless*; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you.’ He probably refers to some particular letter; but adds, ‘as also in all his epistles.’ If we refer to St. Paul’s own language on this subject, we find a remarkable confirmation of that of his brother apostle. When he is enlarging on the High Priesthood of Christ as far removed from the letter of any carnal commandment, and urging his countrymen to lay aside their narrow prejudices and dependence on ordinances, and leaving behind the principles of the doctrine of Christ (in which he includes baptism), to go on, soar up (*φέρεσθαι*) to *perfection*, he says he has much to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing they were mere children, unskilful in the word of righteousness, who must be fed with milk and not with strong meat.²

By ‘*the word of righteousness*,’ λόγος δικαιοσύνης, I

¹ 2 Peter iii. 16.

² Heb. v. 11, 12.

do not see how it is possible to understand the Scriptures of the Old Testament. He was not likely to reproach the Jews with being unskilled in them; nor would the knowledge of them much help him in explaining his doctrine of perfection in Christ. It must rather mean the *rationale, discourse*, or logical argument of righteousness. Strong meat, he says, is for men of full age—perfect men, men in understanding—‘who, by continual exercise, have their intellectual faculties scholastically trained to distinguish the good and the evil.’¹ This will, I know, be denounced as sheer rationalism. Did not our Lord, it will be asked, thank His Heavenly Father that He had hid the gospel from the wise and prudent, and revealed it unto babes? Did He not say, ‘Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven?’ As already shown, He says more. Except ye *be born* from above ye cannot enter. We are more helpless than children to do anything as of ourselves, and yet He says, ‘The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.’ The one revelation does not contradict the other. The common interpretation put upon the first, that we must have the unreasoning faith of children, could not have been that put upon it by St. Paul. To *believe as a child* he would have thought as unbecom-

¹ Τῶν διὰ τὴν ἔξιν τὰ αἰσθήτηρια γεγυμνασμένα ἔχοντων πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ. Heb. v. 14.

ing a man of full age, as to speak as a child, to understand as a child. To believe as a child is, he says, to believe anything, to be tossed about by every blast of vain doctrine ; and he tells the Corinthians that he is obliged to speak unto them as carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 'Howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.'

Had it been the will of God, that the gospel should always be hidden from the wise and prudent, it would not have been miraculously revealed to St. Paul. I know it has been said that such men are only converted by miracle ; but it would be easy to show from Scripture, even from our Lord's parables, that the foolish are not in a better position. St. Paul does indeed, say that 'not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called,' and that 'God has chosen the foolish of this world to confound the wise ;' this lesson we are taught everywhere, the more a man has of the things which the world values, the harder it is to give up all for Christ, and the greater are his temptations and difficulties ; but it is also true that the more he gives up, the more he will receive, and it is not always that they who have fewest talents are found most faithful. It is, indeed, the peculiar glory of the gospel that the simple and unlearned can receive it as freely and fully as those who theorize upon it, and search into its mysteries ; and, had the Church continued to teach it with the sim-

plicity with which Christ preached it to the poor, making the one thing needful, to take up the cross and follow Him, instead of making it a 'religion of sacraments,' or mysteries, a question of abstruse and incomprehensible creeds, the foolish of this world may have continued to confound the wise, or to convert them by their holy lives. Again, had the noble enthusiasm of St. Paul, searching the deep things of God, devoting all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge to understand and explain 'what the will of the Lord is,' been imitated by all who have been wise after the flesh, the exercise of reason in religion might not now have been regarded as unholy. This is, however, only vain speculation ; it was not to be.

We may well imagine that St. Paul would hold all philosophy as 'falsely so-called,' compared with Christian philosophy ; and yet that, exercised as he had been in its schools, he would see many things in a different light from his unlearned brethren. I have in a former work expressed my conviction that his peculiar language respecting *justification by faith* is to be traced to the axiom of Greek philosophy, that men were justified or made righteous by works, by the habitual practice of virtue. The influence of that philosophy is, I think, more evidently seen in what he says on this doctrine of Christian perfection, which is, indeed, the same doctrine under another aspect. He applies the phraseology of Plato to the truths of

Christianity. Plato held that nothing we see is real, but a shadow or reflection of that which exists only in the mind of the Deity.¹ St. Paul makes no allusion to this theory as regards material things, but, of things eternal, he says, 'Now we see them as obscurely reflected in a mirror, hereafter face to face.' It was an axiom of Plato that the one object of man's existence was imitation of God—ὁμοίωσις τῷ Θεῷ.² This is taught in the first, and, indeed, in almost every page of the Bible. Man was created in, or for, the image or imitation of God. 'Seek ye my face; thy face, Lord, will I seek;' and the words of the Psalmist, 'When I wake up after thy likeness I shall be satisfied with it,' express exactly St. Paul's conception of regeneration. Though Plato taught that nothing lower than divine perfection could be the object of man's imitation, he held that this was unattainable, that there was no such thing as perfection in this world. St. Paul knew that perfection had visited this world in the person of the Son of Man, and taught that Christians are perfect in Him. 'We all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory,

¹ It cannot be a mere fortuitous coincidence that our word *idol* (εἰδωλον) means an appearance, not a reality, a *sham*. St. Paul, doubtless refers to this when he says: 'We know that an idol is nothing in the world.' (1 Cor. viii. 4.) The fleshly idols of our hearts are as much shams as that of Jupiter.

² Vide *Philocalia*, pt. ii. p. 106.

even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' He knew, also, how in the Socratic dialogues, the disputants retired again and again, baffled by the question, *What* is righteousness? and he answers for the Christian, his righteousness is hid with Christ in God. The Greek philosophy taught, moreover, that it must be a very low type of righteousness that is derived from fear of punishment or hope of reward; that virtue should be practised spontaneously, as though natural to us. And St. Paul taught that the Christian is not under laws or ordinances, that he does good, not from fear, or hope of reward; the love of Christ constrains him; in Christ he does good unwittingly; his left hand knows not what his right hand is doing; he knows not that he does it unto Him.

Here are questions raised with which Galilean fishermen were not very likely to perplex themselves, and the solution of which St. Paul might well term strong meat for men of full age in understanding. How, then, is it that St. Paul makes the Christian perfect whom he constantly describes as burdened with sins and infirmities? How exempt from the law which he maintains as holy, just, and good? Though we cannot hope to comprehend these mysteries, which St. Paul professed only to know in part, and prophecy in part, we cannot, without attempting to follow him, expect to understand his doctrine on baptism.

As regards the first of these two questions, though

no one goes into its solution so fully as St. Paul, the apparent paradox is broadly and unreservedly propounded by St. John : 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ;' 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin—cannot sin, because he is born of God.'¹ The Gospel and Epistles of St. John contain the substance of St. Paul's more elaborate expositions of this subject. The conversation with Nicodemus will be sufficient for illustration. It is there declared by our Saviour that we have, so to speak, two natures. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit—the old Adam and the new. . My own conviction is, that the figurative expressions—the old man, the carnal man, the mystery of iniquity, antichrist, the prince of this world, the world, the flesh, and the devil—all mean the same principle of evil, which Christ came to destroy. I think the Man of Sin and Antichrist are generally identified, but they are very frequently supposed to refer to something future. This, I think, arises from a mistranslation in our version, which makes St. John and St. Paul contradict each other. There seems to have prevailed in their time an idea that the day of the Lord would not be till this power should be revealed and destroyed. This was contrary to all the teaching

¹ 1 John i. 8, iii. 8.

of the New Testament. ‘Behold, now is the appointed time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.’ St. John says, in refutation of this heresy, ‘As ye have heard that Antichrist shall come ; even now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.’¹ St. Paul, in our translation, is made to affirm it, to tell the Church at Thessalonica, that ‘the day of Christ cannot be until there shall be an apostasy, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.’² I believe in the original the very reverse is stated. St. Paul besought them by the *presence* (παρουσίαν) of Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, not to be shaken from the conviction (σαλευθῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ νοός), that the day of Christ is at hand, or, rather, is come (ἐνέστηκεν).² To make it future, the words ‘for he will not come,’ are interpolated ; and this warning has been converted into a sort of Dame Quickly comfort to his readers, that they need not trouble themselves (θροεῖσθαι) about the day of the Lord—the refiner’s fire and fuller’s soap—yet. Whereas, he says with St. John, ‘The mystery of iniquity doth already work, only He who letteth will let until it shall have been removed out of the way.’ The description of the man of sin, the son of perdition, has been applied to many personages in history, but we should do better to apply it to ourselves. If in-

¹ 1 John ii. 18.

² 2 Thess. ii. 3.

tended for any particular phase of wickedness, it would be to the heathen idolatry, 'whose presence, after the working of Satan,' was then in the temples of Thessalonica. The inveterate antagonism between the flesh and the spirit is represented in strong figurative language; the former is held in check by Christ, and will finally be cast out by the spirit of His mouth—that is, by His Word. Righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness, light has no communion with darkness. We shall better understand how the two principles exist distinct in the same person, by turning to St. Paul's doctrine, that the Christian is not under the law.

St. Paul not only stands alone in declaring that the law of Moses was a bondage from which Christians were delivered, but we know that his brethren in the apostleship were slow to enter into his enlarged views. St. Peter for a time refused to admit any to Baptism, who would not first embrace Judaism, and was only induced to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles by a miraculous vision; while St. Paul proclaimed, that in Christ Jesus there was neither Jew, nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free. In saying that the law was abolished, he meant, I believe, all law, the letter of all carnal commandments; but he doubtless regarded the law of God delivered by Moses as altogether different from any other, and in showing that the Christian was delivered from this, would

deem it superfluous to prove that he was not subject to any merely human law. Nothing can exceed the disparagement which he seems to cast upon the law, which he says is abolished. He calls it, *the ministration of death, the strength of sin, the law of sin and death*; that it is not for a righteous man, but for sinners; and yet he says that he upholds it as holy, just, and good. In his Epistle to the Romans, he discourses most fully concerning man as under no law, as under the law of Moses, and under the Gospel. I can only briefly recapitulate: 'The law,' he says, 'worketh wrath, for where no law is, there is no transgression.' A law or commandment, he infers, was given to Adam, and I am bound to admit, that he supposes it a literal or verbal commandment, not, as I have argued elsewhere, the law of conscience in the natural man or Adam. It makes no difference to his argument, which way we take it. 'Until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.' Further on he says, as though the change effected by the delivery of the law took place in himself: 'I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' He was dead but unconscious of it; it is however very difficult to follow him. It is difficult to understand in what

sense sin was not imputed to the antediluvians, and from the flood to Moses. This probably arises from misconception of the terms *life* and *death*. The law, he says, was spiritual, and declared that spiritual life depended on perfect obedience, that spiritual death followed the least transgression, which could not be without law.

In the seventh and eighth chapters he sums up his argument, but the full force of it is lost in our translation. Taking as an example the case of a woman bound by the law to her husband as long as he lived, but after his death free to marry another, so he says : 'Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ (dead with Christ), that ye should be *born*¹ to, or in another, even to Him who is raised from the dead.' When we were in the flesh, the power of sins, power given to them by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. *But now*, under the Gospel, we are delivered from the law, *being dead to that wherein we were held* (the sins of the flesh), that we should serve in newness of spirit, and

¹ Nothing can show more plainly how little St. Paul's doctrine was understood by the authors of our version, than the translating of *γενέσθαι* to *be married*. It is not only unwarrantable, but objectionable. The Church is, in a figure called the spouse of Christ; but there is not a shadow of authority for applying the phrase to Christians individually, as the Church has done (profanely as appears to me) from a very early period.

not in the oldness of the letter. Is then, he asks, the law which gives this power *sin*? Nay, I had not known sin but by the law; it is the law which shows sin to be sin: ordained to be unto life,¹ it is found to be unto death. But the fault is in himself; the law is spiritual, but he is carnal. He does not what he would, does what he would not, is morally dead, dead in sin, but this very struggle shows that the law is good. He then returns to the point from whence he digressed. ‘*But now*’ (νῦν δὲ)—incorrectly translated ‘*now therefore*,’ which makes what follows chiefly a repetition—‘But now, as a Christian, it is no longer I who do what I would not, but sin that dwelleth in me.’ This is the culminating point, but we had better follow him to the end. Still the good that he would do, he does not; the evil which he would not do, he does. It is not therefore *himself* that does it, but, delighting in the law of God after the *inward man*, he finds another law in his members, at war with the law of his mind or convictions, and making him the slave of sin. ‘Oh! wretched man that I am,’ he exclaims, ‘who shall deliver me from the body of this death,’ and immediately thanks God for his deliverance through Christ, drawing the conclusion, ‘so then with the mind, *myself*, I (αὐτὸς ἐγὼ) serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.’

¹ ‘If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments.’

This, as far as I can comprehend it, is the substance of St. Paul's argument, that the Christian is delivered from the bondage of the law. It is followed up by many reflections, which throw much light upon it, by the aid of which we may trace its connection with the doctrine of a death unto sin, and the new birth unto righteousness. Many probably will draw an inference from the picture here presented to them, that the Christian under the Gospel does not seem to be in a much better position than was the Jew under the law. They will do well to ask themselves, in what they expected the position to be altered :—did they suppose that the Christian was to escape trial and temptations ? The way of salvation by the cross of Christ is not a smooth and even one, nor yet easy to find. The contrast drawn is not between a regenerate and unregenerate man, but between a Christian and a Jew, to whom regeneration was equally necessary. It was a master in Israel whom our Lord reprov'd for not understanding that a man must be born of water and the spirit to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The Jews were invited to drink of the water of life, the wells of salvation, as fully and freely in the Old Testament as in the New. This abstruse investigation of St. Paul's is moreover purely theoretical ; it was not intended to perplex the faith of the simple and unlearned ; but may be regarded rather as the explanation he

would give to one who, learned like himself in the schools, might come to him as Nicodemus did to Christ, asking how can these things be? I need not dwell on the sad results which have followed from elaborating out of it articles of faith. Hence has sprung the antinomianism of the Calvinists, Anabaptists, and Fifth Monarchy men, and this, making regeneration an ordinance, not the least destructive to the faith.

‘But now it is no longer I, but sin that dwelleth in me.’ This is the turning point of the argument, and what does it mean? No one who has read a single Epistle of St. Paul’s, will allow himself to think for a moment that he meant to make excuse for sin. If the effect of the law was to make sin appear exceedingly sinful, could the Gospel tolerate it? No, he says, the Christian cannot tolerate it, cannot commit it; that which is in Christ cannot sin, that which sins is not in Christ. This is, I think, evidently the conclusion he draws in the words which follow:—
‘There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of *life in Christ Jesus* hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that *the righteousness of the law*

might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. . . . So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if the Spirit of God dwell in you, and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ *he is none of His.*' It is not that there is any change in the law of our being, physically or spiritually ; the Christian is not less, but more, exposed to temptation than the Jew, and he receives no new principle of life : 'that which is regenerate or born of God, sinneth not,' was true of the Jew, as also, I believe, of the Gentile. Ye are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwell in you, and he only is in Christ who hath the Spirit of Christ. We have not yet, however, reached the full force of the words, *now it is no longer I*. St. Paul said that under the law he did what he would not, and the heathen might ; and did say that *himself*, his better nature, revolted against the things which the sinfulness and infirmity of his nature compelled him to. The change in the conditions of salvation is stated in St. Paul's words last quoted. Now that Christ has come in the flesh, has done what man under the law could not do, has rendered perfect obedience, conquered sin, and by the death of the Covenanter has confirmed the covenant, that all nations should be blest in Him ; now, henceforth all who conform to the covenant are dead unto sin in Him, and if so, are dead unto the law ; where there is no sin, the law is

a dead letter. The depth of his sublime speculations will unfold itself more fully as we proceed ; suffice for the present his position, that the Christian lives wholly to Christ, that that which sinneth is not of Christ but of the flesh, and that these two principles not only have nothing in common, but are diametrically opposed to each other, as he says in another letter : ‘ The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.’¹ I cannot help here recurring to the extraordinary approximation which Plato made to these opinions of St. Paul. He held that the flesh was utterly corrupt, nay, had no real existence, but was doomed to pass away, whilst the soul was of God, or rather was God ; and that righteousness was independent of all law. I have only ventured to suggest, that St. Paul may, by his knowledge of philosophy, have been led into the investigation of mysteries which other inspired writers do not go into. I fully believe that all his deductions are drawn exclusively from the word of God. Coleridge, in his *Aids to Reflection*, says: ‘ Several of the Fathers ventured to believe that Plato had some dim conception of the necessity of a Mediator,’² and raises the question whether he could have derived his ideas

¹ Gal. v. 17-18.

² Aph. 32, p. 24.

from Scripture or from what source. It is an interesting subject for speculation, but need not perplex us, if we believe, with St. John, that there is but one 'light which lighteth *every man that cometh into the world.*'¹ *Christ has told us, that this light in us* may be darkness; and then how great is that darkness! greater in a Christian who lives to the flesh, than in a heathen who strives after righteousness.

We now proceed to trace this doctrine of Christian perfection as connected with baptism in the Epistles of St. Paul. Perhaps the most complete exposition is given in the sixth chapter of that to the Romans. It is as follows: 'Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is free from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ we believe that we shall also live with Him; knowing this, that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him. For in

¹ John i. 9.

that He died He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth He liveth unto God. Likewise *reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*' The reader will have no difficulty in applying this to the chapters succeeding that from which I have just quoted at length, or rather in perceiving in it the text of which the latter are the explanations; but I think he will not find it easy to connect it with the outward rite of baptism. We will however take another passage, much to the same effect, from his epistle to the Colossians, in which declaring them 'buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, *through faith* of the operation of God,' he argues that they are delivered from ordinances, and thus continues: 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.' I will only quote one other passage, which is especially important, inasmuch as he applies his principles to his own experiences, showing that if the death unto sin and rising again unto righteousness is the effect of baptism, it had in his case been very imperfectly attained.

It is from the Epistle of the Philippians, but is not

very correctly given in our authorised version. I read it as follows. After asserting that Christians are the true circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh; he professes that he had suffered the loss of all things, 'so that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is of God by faith; that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death; if by any means (or in any measure) I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already received it, or were already perfect; but I follow after it, if that I might lay hold of that which I have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have laid hold of it; but forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, this one thing I keep steadily in view, pressing on to the prize of the calling of God from above in Christ Jesus. Let us then, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God will reveal even this unto you. But in so far as we have attained to walk by the same rule, to think the same thing,¹ be ye followers together

¹ I can here make no sense without joining the sixteenth and seventeenth verses in one sentence. By *me* I think he must mean himself, as the exponent of the customs of the general

with *me*, and regard those as so walking (*i.e.* by the same rule) as ye have *us* for an example. . . For our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ; who will change our vile body, that it may be like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. Therefore, *my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown, stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*'

From all these passages one conclusion is inevitable, which is, that the perfection spoken of is theoretical, not actual. He professes that he had not attained to it himself, whilst he includes himself among those who are perfect in Christ, at the same time reminding them that they only imperfectly understood the canon of perfection which they had to walk by. But it is not the less real, not the less ours, because we are not in possession. It is ours by the covenant into which we are baptized. Our calling in Christ is to perfection. To Abraham, when he was admitted into covenant with God, it was commanded, 'Walk before Me, and be thou perfect ;'¹ and our Saviour concluding His

body, *us*. Though earnestly exhorting them to *think the same thing*, he does not make orthodoxy a necessary condition of Christian fellowship ; there must have been divisions among them, and he beseeches Euodias and Syntyches to think the same thing *in the Lord*, yet nowhere does he express more Christian love than here.

¹ Gen. xvii. 1.

exposition of the decalogue, said, 'Be ye *therefore* perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.'¹ This was the requirement of the law, and this was fulfilled to the letter by Christ, who, having subdued sin in the flesh, cried out on the cross, 'It is perfected,' established the covenant by the death of the Covenanter, that in Him all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

If perfection was demanded by the law, if even enlightened heathens perceived that nothing less could be proposed for imitation, can we believe that less is required by the Gospel? Nor can I find any promise of a new sense or faculty, physical or spiritual, to enable us to attain to this perfection. As I read it, the Bible teaches that all that is or ever has been of good in man is of the Spirit, all that is of evil is of the flesh. And yet a complete change is effected in the relationship of man to God by the sacrifice of the death of Christ. The righteousness which man could not fulfil was perfectly fulfilled by the Son of Man, and all men are called to it. There is no other righteousness. In so far as men partake of it they are Christ's, in Christ; in so far as they do wickedness they are in the flesh. St. Paul said, though he did not reckon himself to have laid hold of perfection, he knew that Christ's perfection laid hold of him, that

¹ Matt. v. 48.

he was pledged to it ; this I think is what he means by being baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ ; the old man, the flesh, must be mortified, put to death, that the new man may be raised up. And from this doctrine we may, I think, form an idea of what is meant by the other, ‘That which is born of God sinneth not ;’ it is *no longer* I, but sin that dwelleth in me ; and that the law is not for a righteous man, but for those who walk after the flesh, for all as far as they do so. We are only Christians in so far as we live unto Christ. Much lower estimates of the holiness of Christianity are even now formed, and favourably received. In *Ecce Homo*, in which Mr. Gladstone says the Gospel is presented to us with ‘its eye not dim, nor its natural force abated,’ it is said of the theocracy or kingdom of God, ‘some are sunk in sin, others lead holy lives.’ This is not the Gospel of St. Paul.¹

We will now turn to the institution of the Sacrament of Baptism by our Lord and Saviour ; not as bearing upon the question of a new life *in* baptism, for it does not touch it, but attentively to consider the import of the words our Saviour then used, under the light thrown upon them by the teaching of St. Paul. They are recorded by two Evangelists, Matthew and Mark,² the words supplemented by the latter being

¹ *Ecce Homo*, p. 83.

² The substance of the words used by our Saviour on this

those which will especially demand attention. According to St. Matthew they stand thus : 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' St. Mark, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized will be saved, but he that believeth not will be damned.' I think it will not be denied that a very general interpretation put upon these words has been, that the Gospel was to be preached to save souls from hell. This is true, whatever meaning we attach to the term ; but it has been also taught that to escape hell is to be saved. This idea is diametrically opposed to the doctrine of perfection which we have been considering ; it brings back the law of sin and death, making righteousness the effect of fear.

Now whatever be the tremendous import of the terms *heaven* and *hell*, of which we cannot form an idea, one thing appears to me very clearly taught in the gospel of Christ, which is that they, in part at

occasion is preserved by all the evangelists ; but only Matthew and Mark mention baptism in connection with the commission thus given to the apostles. I shall have to compare the four narratives as to their bearing on another subject.

least, refer to this life. To enter into life, or the kingdom of heaven, Christ exhorted His followers to do at once; nay, more than this, He says, ‘ Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath* everlasting life, and cometh not into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.’¹ Perhaps the word most frequently used in Holy Scripture for salvation is *life*. It was symbolized by the tree of life in Eden, and ‘ Hear, and your soul shall live! ’—‘ Drink of the water of life,’ is the universal language of both Testaments ; and I think we may infer from Christ’s words last cited and from many other passages in the New, that they who do live to God in Christ, have escaped hell, are passed from death, but I don’t think it is said of any one individually that he has attained salvation,—‘ is made every whit whole.’ This is to be arrived at, here or hereafter, through faith in Christ crucified. He has redeemed us from death and hell, but we must go on with Him to perfection, or our redemption, the price paid for us, will profit us nothing. But is it not said individually, ‘*He* that is born of God;’ ‘*he* that believeth on Me,’ sinneth not, is passed from death into life?—Though I believe a sufficient

¹ John v. 24, 25.

answer to this has already been given—that it is in as far as a man believes and is regenerated; yet doubtless, in the sight of God, those who are living to Christ and they who are living to themselves are as clearly distinguished as light and darkness : the former live, the latter are dead—but it is a distinction man cannot draw. He that is born of the Spirit hears the voice of the Spirit—hears, and lives; but he cannot tell whence It cometh or whither It goeth.

It is beyond doubt that the belief has been very general in the Church, that the salvation of the gospel is to deliver souls from the powers of hell. In the early legends of the saints, we are told that when they were baptizing heathens by hundreds, legions of fiends were seen around, gnashing their teeth with rage at the escape of their victims. Now, if we take hell as the punishment of sin, it would not be a very presumptuous assertion to say that we may very possibly increase the danger of it, by bringing men within hearing of the gospel. The men of Nineveh and of Sodom and Gomorrah will rise in the judgment and condemn those who have rejected Christ; and St. Paul places righteous heathens above false Jews and Christians. Men will be judged by their works, by the use they have made of the light given them ; and the works Christ mentions by which they will be judged are such as Christians, Jews, and heathens acknowledge they are bound to perform—to

do good and no evil to their brethren. I cannot dwell on this subject, being conscious that I should not be able to clear it up; but many passages might be cited in support of the view that the torment of hell *accompanies* sin, and especially the sin of not loving our neighbour. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ commences His spiritual exposition of the law thus: 'Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment;' but the words *ἐνοχος ἔσται*, here translated *will be in danger of*, mean rather, will have sentence passed upon him. In other places in the New Testament, *ἐνοχος* is generally translated *guilty*; but this is not strictly correct—amenable or obnoxious to would be nearer: amenable to a law, and to the punishment of transgression. Thus St. James says: 'If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well; but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, and are *convicted under the law as transgressors*. For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is *held guilty* (*γέγονεν ἐνοχος*) of all.' Death being the penalty of transgression, he is amenable to it by breaking one commandment as much as by breaking all. And this is what our Saviour teaches: Whosoever calls his brother opprobrious names is amenable to the tribunals of men, and whosoever shall say to his brother, Thou fool, incurs the punish-

ment of hell fire; by one sin as much as by a thousand. Christ's figurative language, that it is better to enter into life halt or lame, scarcely applies to another state of existence—we cannot take our worldly idols with us. And this applies still more strongly to the narrative of the man who had great possessions, who came to Christ seeking eternal life. 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;' and though he should, as he professed, observe these, one thing is still needful: 'Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou wilt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up thy cross and follow Me.' Was he to sell all that he had, to have treasure in heaven, and to take up his cross in another state? Apply Christ's words to this life, and all is consistent; even the simile of the camel passing through a needle's eye is reduced to plain and obvious truth. He that hath given up all for Christ, is no longer rich in the things of this world, his treasure is in heaven. Christ indeed promises in the end of the discourse that he will enjoy more of them a hundred-fold, even though persecuted for His sake. He will be free from corroding and anxious care about them, and will have the delight of using them in his Master's service.

Very confused ideas are sometimes entertained of a distinction between a man and his soul, which in Scripture mean the same thing. This has much fostered the belief that to save the soul from hell,

refers to a future life. A saying has been attributed to an eminent living Professor (I know not with what truth) that if men thought less of their dirty souls and more of their duty, it would be better for them. Whoever said it, was doubtless aware that it is more than borne out by many sayings of our Lord. 'Take no thought for your soul, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink ;'¹ and again : 'He that loveth his soul shall lose it, and he that hateth his soul in this world shall keep it unto life eternal ;' and yet He says, in the same breath, 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?'² In all these instances except the last, ψυχή is translated *life* in the authorised version, but it does not mean life—certainly not the natural life, and there were little sense in saying that a man must lose his spiritual life in this world to keep it to life eternal. Our translators shrink from the honest meaning of these passages, under the impression that to save the soul is the one thing needful, and that this salvation refers to another state of existence, not to the present life. A man may hate his father and mother, but he cannot hate his soul. The soul is a man's self ; to hate his soul is to hate himself, to deny himself. St. Luke, for lose his own soul reads, lose 'himself.' St. Paul says : 'Present *yourselves*, your *souls* and bodies, a *living*

¹ Matt. vi. 25.

² John xii. 24-25.

sacrifice unto God.' Had a certain man, who said to his soul 'eat, drink, and be merry,' thought less of his dirty soul, it would have been better for him. 'If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own soul also, he cannot be My disciple; and whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be My disciple.'¹ Until Christians more fully acknowledge and feel it to be their bounden duty to make this surrender, and to make the righteousness of Christ the *first* object in life; and until Christian Governments make the suppression of sin and the promoting of this righteousness the first object of government, there can be no real progress, individually or politically. Until Christian States make more visible progress in righteousness, missions amongst heathen nations will not advance more rapidly. The state of society in Christian countries and cities is now generally well known, and we are already taunted with zeal for making proselytes to much the same purpose as the Scribes and Pharisees of old.²

I have now done with baptismal regeneration, and will only, in conclusion, allude to another baptism which is repeatedly spoken of, both in the Old and New Testaments—the baptism of fire. It is thus described by John the Baptist as part of the ministry

¹ Luke xiv. 26-27.

² Matt. xxiii. 15.

of Christ : ‘ He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into His garner, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.’ I see no reason to doubt that, as regards this life, this fire is part of, if not identical with, that which we have lately considered—the fire of hell—a purifying fire to the faithful, a devouring fire to the wicked. Our Saviour ascribes the exercise of this purifying process to Satan. Warning Peter of his danger, He says : ‘ Satan hath desired to have you, that he might *sift you as wheat* ;’ and St. Paul, in the case of that ‘ wicked person,’ bids the Corinthians ‘ with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.’¹ This purgation is described by a great variety of similes in Scripture. Sometimes the chaff is to be burned, sometimes the stubble. Again, the metal is to be purified from dross in the furnace ; and there are many passages which would lead to the conclusion that, as the fiery trial is purgatorial in this life, we may infer that such it will be in another state ; but it must be admitted that there are others which seem to forbid such inference. We must balance between them, and I will only repeat the opinion which I

¹ 1 Cor. v. 5.

have expressed elsewhere, that there is more to encourage than to quench the hope that, as all things are Christ's, He will raise up and restore all things at the last day. We have only to do with the baptism of fire in this life. Christ underwent it Himself, and warned His disciples that they must expect it, or, as John says, He would therewith baptize them. It is very generally taught that this promise of the baptism of fire was fulfilled at the day of Pentecost, but I cannot see any connection. The Baptist is quoting the prophecy of Malachi of the coming of the Lord, and of himself as His forerunner. In this prophecy the winnowing fan is not mentioned ; but the Lord is described as coming to His temple, as a refiner's fire and fuller's soap. By the temple we may understand His body, the Church ; and by the sons of Levi, the members made priests unto God. 'He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver ; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.'¹ I cannot understand how this baptism can apply to the tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost.

Among many strange theories broached in *Ecce Homo*, not the least strange is that which makes the baptism of fire the being baptized in the 'enthusiasm of *humanity*'—a favourite phrase with the author,

¹ Mal. iii. 1-3.

whatever it may mean. 'Baptism,' he says, 'means cleansing, and fire means warmth. How can warmth cleanse? The answer is that *moral* warmth does cleanse.'¹ The oft-recurring simile of the furnace seems altogether to have escaped his notice. It is not a satisfactory explanation, but I know not where to look for one more so, or, indeed, for any explanation at all; and yet it seems to me impossible to doubt that it refers to that fiery trial of suffering and death through which the Son of Man was perfected, and which He told His disciples they must partake of if they would partake of His glory. After declaring that the servant who knew his lord's will and did it not, will be punished with more stripes than one who did it not because he knew it not, and that to whom much is given, of him will much be required; He continued: 'I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled? And I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be perfected!' (τελεσθῆ.)² His last words on the cross were, 'It is perfected!' and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. On another occasion, he said to His disciples: 'Ye will indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and will be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.' Can there be any doubt that this cup, this fiery ordeal, is that

¹ *Ecce Homo*, p. 8.

² Luke xii. 47 *et seq.*

foretold by the Baptist? Though the flesh shrank from it in His agony, and He prayed only *if it were possible* that this cup—the bitter dregs yet remaining—might pass from Him, Christ's resigned conviction ever was, 'The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?' And has He not given this cup to His faithful followers, baptized them with this baptism in succeeding ages of the Church? We cannot conceive a more dreadful idea of the fire of hell than in the cruel tortures which men have inflicted on each other, thinking they were doing God service.¹ The same fiery trial which worketh death in the ungodly, purifieth those who suffer with and are perfected with Christ. The unquenchable fire will burn the wood and the stubble—the perishable works which men build, even on the true foundation—and they will themselves be saved, yet so as by fire. This baptism is not an ordinance after the letter of a carnal commandment, but it is an eternal law of creation, more truly regenerative than the baptism of water. Like many other things common unto man, it is used

¹ Yet we read in *Ecce Homo*, 'If you could be sure that it was not the prophet but the pernicious sophist that was burnt in the fire, and if by reducing his too busy brain to safe and orthodox ashes, you could destroy his sophistry, without creating at the same time an unwholesome dread of intellectual activity and freedom, then Christian humanity might look with some satisfaction even on an *auto da fé*,' p. 280. We seem not yet to have learned what spirit we are of.

as a means of regeneration in those whom the Refiner purifies in the temple of His body. All, for good or evil, pass through the ordeal ; all are baptized unto Christ's death ; but, as regards this life, they only profit by it who, through faith, attain in some measure to His death unto sin, and resurrection unto righteousness. What St. Paul says of the Jew's privileges in circumcision, may be transferred to the baptismal regeneration of the Christian : 'He is not a Christian which is one outwardly, neither is that baptism which is outward in the flesh ; but he is a Christian which is one inwardly ; and baptism is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.'¹

I have yet a word to say on a very distorted view which has been taken of this baptism of fire, which was thought to have been dispelled by the Reformation, but with which many in our day and in our Church seem to be fascinated. This is, that a man may assume to himself the office of the *Refiner*, and heap the fire on his own head, in self-inflicted tortures and privations. Mr. Isaac Taylor has gone very fully into this subject in his 'Ancient Christianity,' showing that asceticism was practised in a much more revolting manner in the Nicene Church than in the Romish. He founds his denunciation on the prophetic warning

¹ Romans ii. 28, 29.

which St. Paul gives Timothy, that in time to come some will depart from the faith, giving heed to false spirits and the teaching of fanatical enthusiasts¹ who will speak lies in hypocrisy, and with a seared conscience, will forbid to marry, and teach that men must abstain from meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving.² He minutely compares this prophecy with its fulfilment, and gives a terrible description of the asceticism of the Nicene Church, and of its effects on Christianity, which I will only supplement by another passage, which throws much light on that first quoted, and in which, I think, St. Paul plainly intimates that the leaven of this hypocrisy, or fanatical self-delusion,³ was already fermenting. It is from the second chapter of his Epistle to the Colossians. He is enlarging on the completeness of Christians in their Head, buried with and risen in baptism with Him who has blotted out the letter of all ordinances, nailing it to His cross: 'Let no man, therefore, judge you in eating or in drinking, or in regard to a feast, or a new moon, or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ. Let no man pass judgment against you, wilfully in-

¹ This is at least nearer the meaning of *δαιμονίων* than devils.

² 1 Tim. iv. 1.

³ I think *ὑπόκρισις* will bear this meaning, teaching error under the disguise of religious zeal.

truding into things he hath not seen in a humiliation and religion of angels; inordinately (εἰκῆ) puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands nourished and strengthened increaseth with the increase of God.' It seems to me impossible that this extraordinary description can apply to any chance impostor or deceiver, to whose temptations the Colossians were likely to be exposed; but it describes very accurately a Jewish sect, then numerous, from which the asceticism and renunciation of all earthly ties of the first Christian hermits, and the monastic system, are doubtless derived—the *Essenes*. There is an account of them in Smith's 'Bible Dictionary,' contributed by the Rev. Brooke Foss Westcott, from which we learn that they were cenobites, and as a rule did not allow of marriage, and it is said 'the obscurity of the Essenes as a distinct body arises from the fact that they represented originally a tendency rather than an organisation; communions were a result of their practice—not a necessary part of it.' The practice therefore of their austerities is very likely to have prevailed even among the converts to Christianity; or only supposing that the Colossians might come in contact with them, the warning given, not to be deceived by them, is suited to the occasion. Communion with the unseen world seems to have been one of the highest objects of their aspirations. This, coupled with a remark of Josephus,

that they preserved alike the books of their sect and the names of the angels, would explain St. Paul's expression—intruding into things unseen, in a would-be worship of angels. This idea is also confirmed by the following remark of Mr. Westcott's: 'The best among the Jews felt the peril of Essenism as a system, and combined to discourage it; they shrank with an instinctive dread from the danger of connecting asceticism with spiritual power, and cherished the great truth which lay in the saying, "Doctrine is not in heaven."' Mr. Taylor also says that the ascetics erred in making virtue (religion) a *celestial phantasy* instead of a *terrestrial excellence*.¹ I think we must look in this direction to find the meaning of the word *angel worship*. It was not communion and fellowship with Christ and his members. The word translated respectively angel and devil in these two passages had probably in some measure a common meaning; but whatever that may be, it is evident that the false teachers whom St. Paul denounces were men—not supernatural beings.

Whether or not St. Paul in writing to the Colossians refers to the tenets of the Essenes, what he says is undoubtedly dead against asceticism. Such self-inflicted penances, so far from indicating hatred or renunciation of self, proceed, he says, from a carnal mind;

¹ *A. C.* vol. i. p. 360.

they are not for Christ, or the members of His body. 'If therefore,' he continues, 'ye are dead with Christ from the elements of the world, why, as though still in the world, do ye thus dogmatise, "Touch not, taste not, handle not," things which all perish in the using (are profitable to no one), after the commandments and doctrines of men. Which indeed have a show of wisdom in will, or would-be worship (as of angels) in the humiliation and unsparing punishment of the body, and not being in any honour for the satisfying of the flesh.' This show of wisdom has been very taking in all ages and nations—sorcerers, heathen priests, soothsayers and fakirs have made capital out of it; but it is not a weapon for the armoury of the Christian. That it did good service for the monks and hermits in the conversion of the heathen, does not prove that it was right; the same effects have been produced by the overruling providence of God through means still more objectionable. St. Paul was no ascetic; he bids us rejoice with them that do rejoice as well as weep with them that weep. No man ever less spared his own body; but he dedicated it to the service of Christ and His members, not to unprofitable angelic worship in a cell or on a pillar. I cannot conceive a more humiliating example of superstition than a man scourging himself for his sins; and should such terrible punishment as the late Abbé Lacordaire inflicted upon him-

self cause death (a not improbable result), I do not hesitate to say it would be self-murder, unless indeed the verdict should be *of unsound mind*. It may be objected that fasting is recommended, if not commanded; to which I will only reply, that it is not recommended as a punishment, but as a preparative for holiness. It is often advocated as being, when not carried to excess, conducive to health; if practised to such an extent as to make a man unfit for the duties of life, it must be sinful. Mr. Isaac Taylor has so closely compared St. Paul's prophetic warning to Timothy that asceticism and celibacy were to assume the proportions of apostasy, and so fully entered into the lamentable results, that nothing remains to be said upon it. I think, however, that St. Paul may have seen that the prophecy, wherever contained, was beginning to be fulfilled, and I should imagine that he referred it to a heathen source. No such doctrines are taught in the Old Testament; there was no celibacy of the priesthood, and the account which Isaiah gives of such fasting as is acceptable to God,¹ corresponds very closely with what St. Paul says to Timothy, bidding him 'refuse profane and old wives' fables and exercise *himself* rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise, or training (*γυμνασία*) profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things.'

¹ Isaiah lviii.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

As regards this sacrament, the members of the Church of England—at least those who profess to be satisfied with her doctrines—may be divided into two parties: those who interpret the Prayer Book by the Articles, who constitute the majority ; and those who, if they regard them at all, interpret the Articles by the Prayer Book—the minority, but an increasing minority. Transubstantiation, or the monstrous figment that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, is expressly condemned by the twenty-eighth Article, and I believe all parties in our Church disavow it ; but if not taught by the extreme High Church party, something is taught very like it, and not a whit more rational ; and it is not very long since that Archbishop Manning said, the priests of the Romish Church were relieved from teaching it by the Anglican clergy. I shall have nothing to do with this superstition, nor yet with that which the High Anglican clergy have substituted for it in the doctrine of the real presence ; that is, that the body and blood of

Christ are partaken of, by all who receive this sacrament, either to their spiritual refreshment or to their condemnation. This is not the doctrine of the Church of England ; even the Catechism teaches that they are only received by the faithful ; this is more expressly declared in the Articles, '*only* after a heavenly and spiritual manner ; and the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith.' My own conviction is, that we do not eat the body and blood of Christ in the Supper, in any other sense than we do at all times, unless it be figuratively ; and that Christ is not present otherwise than He declared, after His resurrection, He is at all times to those who seek to extend and promote His kingdom :—'Lo, I am with you *alway*, even unto the end of the world.' As in baptismal regeneration, so with regard to the doctrine of the real presence—once establish it, and many passages may be found to coincide, but such coincidences prove nothing, unless it can be shown that there is a safe foundation on which to rest them.

I know I shall lay myself open to the imputation of reckless presumption, in denying that there is any foundation in Scripture for this doctrine—a doctrine which so many great and good men have maintained in our Church for centuries ; but, be it remembered, it is an imputation to which our best divines exposed themselves in the fifteenth century, in questioning the

much older tradition of transubstantiation; and I believe that I am only carrying out the question to its legitimate issue—an issue for which many were even then prepared. The doctrine of our Church is, ‘if with a true penitent heart and lively faith, we receive this holysacrament, we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood.’ This is, I think, unscriptural. In the first place, the word *flesh* is never, I believe, applied in the New Testament to the bread of the Eucharist, and the phrase *spiritually eat*, appears to me a solecism. It would be more rational to say, that the flesh feeds on the spirit, than the spirit on the flesh, even the flesh of Christ. When the Church further teaches that *our souls are refreshed*, souls and bodies are *preserved unto everlasting life* by the body and blood of Christ, she manifestly contradicts His teaching, where, in the only explanation of what He meant by eating His flesh and drinking His blood, He said, it is the Spirit that quickeneth, *the flesh profiteth nothing*.

The doctrine that we *verily and indeed* eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood, is founded mainly, if not entirely, on the words used by our Lord in instituting the sacrament, and on the passage here quoted, from the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel; and as I believe this does not directly refer to the Lord's Supper, it will be most convenient to take up this question first—to consider what is taught in this dis-

course. I have reserved it for this section of my little work, because all doctrine inclining to transubstantiation mainly rests upon it; but, as before stated, it more properly belongs to the doctrine of a heavenly birth, taught also to Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria. To the former, who professed that he knew Jesus came from God, Christ said, in effect, that no man could enter the kingdom of heaven did he not come from God; to the woman He said, 'He that drinketh of this water (of Jacob's well), will thirst again, but he that drinketh of the water that I give him, will never thirst;' and to the Jews, who told Him that Moses gave them bread from heaven, He said, the manna was not from heaven, 'The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and *giveth life unto the world*. He that cometh unto Me will never hunger, and he that believeth on Me will never thirst.' This bread, He goes on to say, is His flesh, which He will give for the life of the world. Can there be any reasonable doubt, that the hunger and thirst here spoken of is satisfied by the life from above, of which He discoursed to Nicodemus? All who accept the teaching of the Prayer Book, that in the Eucharist we eat the *flesh* of Christ, must refer this discourse to the institution of the Lord's Supper for fulfilment. Whether this reference is obvious is candidly considered by the present Archbishop of York, in a contribution to Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible,' vol. i. p. 1049, who says: 'Whether this

passage refers, and in what degree, to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is a question on which commentators have been much divided, but two observations should in some degree guide our interpretation : the one, that if the *primary* reference of the discourse had been to the Lord's Supper, it would have been uttered at the institution of the rite, and not before, at a time when the disciples could not possibly make application of it to a sacrament of which they had never even heard ; the other, that the form of speech in this discourse comes so near that which is used in instituting the Lord's Supper, that it is impossible to exclude all reference to that sacrament.' Here the improbability that the Lord's Supper is *primarily* alluded to, is admitted ; but the archbishop in his interpretation connects the two very closely by making the primary reference to be to the sacrifice and death of Christ ; whereas that we derive all life from Him, is the first great truth that presents itself : 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, *ye have no life in you.*' At present I am only bespeaking a patient hearing by showing that the close connection between this discourse and the Eucharist is not a foregone conclusion. I should say, with Doddridge, that the latter was intended to impress our minds with a sense of the importance of the truths taught in the discourse, but that it is unwarrantable to interpret this text as chiefly referring to the ordinance.

Alexander Cruden—who perhaps had more knowledge of the Bible than any other Englishman of the last century, and whose work, regarded only as a Bible dictionary, is an extraordinary task for one man to have accomplished, and which, as such, has been much undervalued—gives, to my mind, a more clear-sighted interpretation of the principal words and phrases used in this discourse than I have met with elsewhere. For example:—*Bread*: ‘To bread is compared Jesus Christ, who is the true food for the soul and both the *author and matter* of spiritual life, John vi. 41, 55. We are one bread, 1 Cor. 10, 17. We are joined together in one mystical body, and declare ourselves to be so, by our fellowship together in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper; for the bread we there eat is one bread, and the wine we drink is one wine, though the one be composed of many grains of corn, and the other made up of many particular grapes.’ Under *Flesh*: ‘To be one *flesh* denotes a most inseparable union, and an intimate communion, as if the two were but one person or one body, Gen. ii. 24, “And they shall be one flesh.” This phrase is used by the apostle to show the union and communion that is between Christ and believers, Eph, v. 30, 31. Flesh also signifies the human nature of Christ. . . . The flesh of Christ signifies *whole* Christ, both God and man in one Person, John vi. 55. My flesh is meat indeed, that is, I myself, with all My benefits, being received.

and applied by faith.' I think the principal thing taught in this discourse, is that Christ is the Author and Giver of our natural as well as of our spiritual life; that our flesh is His flesh, and His ours—we in Him, and He in us—that we could not partake of His spirit did we not partake of His flesh. We could have no life in us. Without further preface I will now attempt to give an epitome of this sermon of our Lord. It was not addressed to His disciples, to whom it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to strangers, whom He had probably never seen before the preceding day, when He miraculously fed them. From the words, 'The Passover, a feast of the Jews was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him,' it is conjectured that they were pilgrims going up to the feast, and amongst them might be masters in Israel, who, like Nicodemus, would be more disposed to question and argue than to receive instruction, and to whom, according to His custom, He would speak in parables. At all events, a distinction is observed between the Jews whom He addresses and His disciples. The multitude followed Him across the lake to Tiberias, whither He had withdrawn Himself with His disciples. On their arrival our Lord thus addressed them. 'Ye seek me, not because ye understood the signs (earthly food, signs of the heavenly), but because ye did eat of the loaves and

were filled.' Seeing they saw, and did not perceive. 'Work not,' he continues, 'to eat that which perisheth, but that which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give unto you; for Him hath God the Father sealed.'

To this they said, 'What shall we do that we might work the works of God?' Probably meaning 'such works as Thou doest.' He replies, 'This is the work of God, that ye should believe on Him whom He hath sent.' Then they said to Him, 'What then is this sign which Thou makest, that we may understand and believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' Christ answers, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not the bread from heaven, but My Father *giveth you* the true bread from heaven, for the bread of God is He who cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.' We are not left in uncertainty whether or not the Jews in the wilderness ate this bread from heaven; St. Paul expressly says, on the authority of these, Christ's words, that they did. 'They did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank from the Rock which followed, and the Rock was Christ.' Then said they unto Him, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me will never hunger,

and he that believeth on me will never thirst.' This He repeats again and again, with some variation of expression, and, perhaps meaning, the full force of which is above human comprehension: 'He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the bread which liveth (or hath life in itself, *ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ζῶν*), which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.' 'As the living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me even he shall live by Me.'

There is doubtless much here that is difficult to understand; on such a subject, how could it be otherwise? But if to eat of the bread from heaven is the same thing as to be born from above, to be regenerated, these expressions present no more difficulty, but exactly accord with St. Paul's view of regeneration, that it is to partake of—to eat, so to speak—of the perfect righteousness of Christ. If any man doubt the identity, wholly or in part, between these doctrines, let him compare the whole of the conversation with Nicodemus—of which I have given only a part—with this, and say whether the scope and tendency is not the same in both. In both, He intimates, things are

taught which could only be known to Him who had come down from heaven.

After asking Nicodemus how it was possible for those who believed Him not when He told them earthly things, to believe when He told them heavenly things, He thus explains the matter of what He taught: 'No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.' The exact coincidence of doctrine in these two discourses must become more strongly impressed upon us as we proceed; at present we have to consider

the somewhat startling assertion that if a man eat of the bread of life he will live for ever. 'Whosoever eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life;' these, and other expressions of like import, appear to me to mean the same thing as that righteousness which St. Paul imputes to those who are in Christ: that they are dead with Him unto sin, risen with Him unto righteousness. The only conclusion I could arrive at with regard to this perfection was, that we attain to it only in so far as we are Christ's and live unto Him; and this, I think, Christ teaches in the passage before us: 'He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in Him.' The converse must be true also. He that abideth in Me, eateth My flesh; and this is exactly what Christ teaches under the figure of the vine and the branches. A branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine; 'he that abideth in Me and I in him, beareth much fruit:'¹ fruit unto righteousness. What He says also of the Heavenly Vine-dresser, that He taketh away unfruitful branches and pruneth the fruitful, that they may bear more fruit, agrees very closely with what He here says—that no man can come unto Him and eat of the bread from heaven, except God the Father draw him. If we dismiss from our imaginations the idea that all who are not called are doomed to eternal fire, this declaration will not disturb us more than the thought

¹ John xv. 5.

that the life of the body also comes from God. The promise of everlasting life to all who come to Him, believe in Him, and abide in Him, He affirmed at all times, not only that they should receive it, but that they had it in possession. To Martha, when she said she knew that her brother would rise again at the resurrection, He said : 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die.' There is therefore no peculiar difficulty attaching to the doctrine that those who eat the true bread from heaven will never die—that is, spiritually; but it is also here declared that whosoever eateth Christ's flesh and drinketh His blood hath eternal life; and as I cannot but believe that by His flesh and blood is meant His human nature, of which all men partake, I think the bread of life and the flesh and blood cannot be identical. I think also, if we look closely into the text, that they are not declared to be so. It is not said that His flesh and blood came down from heaven, nor that they who partake of them will never hunger or thirst. This promise must be confined to the faithful, being in substance the same as that given in the last of the beatitudes; not to hunger and to be satisfied being the same thing. The words 'If a man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh,' do not, I think, give the full meaning of the Greek, *καὶ ὁ ἄρτος δὲ ὃν ἐγὼ δώσω*. We make

δε̅ redundant. I read it, 'This bread is *moreover*, or is *also*, My flesh, which I will give, or offer, as a sacrifice for the life of the world.'

The next declaration which, in our translation, seems strongly to support our Church's doctrine, that we eat Christ's flesh as nourishment, will, I think, when closely examined, be found to tell against it: 'My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.' The words βρῶσις and πόσις, here rendered meat and drink, strictly mean *eating* and *drinking*, not that which is eaten or drunk. As ποίησις means making or poesy, ποίημα¹ the thing made, or the poem, so βρῶσις is the eating, βρῶμα the thing eaten; πόσις is drinking, πόμα the thing drunk. The word most frequently translated *meat*, is τροφή *food*; and though βρῶσις is, as *eating* in English, sometimes

¹ In my *Essay on Poetic Beauty* I tried to demonstrate, but got none to attend, that the one reason why Aristotle's imitative theory of poetry was misunderstood and neglected was, that the distinction was not preserved between ποίησις and ποίημα, between μίμησις and μίμημα; this theory is, that poesis, poesy, or making is *imitating*, μίμησις. That the poem or thing made, may, and must, have many adjuncts, many great and beautiful qualities not essentially poetic; but that the one thing which distinguishes poetry from prose is imitating, imagery or imagination. This is definite and intelligible, whilst all modern theories of poetry that I have seen, seem mere declamations on the spiritual, the unseen, and the infinite, about a *priesthood*, 'not in the roll of common men.' But it is by their fruits that we know them, and must judge them; there is but one light, and that is from above, and this, in us, is often darkness. All that is to be acquired is knowledge.

used to signify *whereof to eat*, it is when nothing is specified of the nature of the food—simply something to be eaten. Thus when His disciples pressed their Master to eat, after his discourse with the woman of Samaria, He said: ‘I have that whereof to eat (*βρῶσιν φαγεῖν*) which ye know not of;’ when He signifies what it is—‘My *meat* is’—He uses the word *βρῶμα*. St. Paul, too, referring to this very passage as importing that the Jews in the wilderness fed upon Christ, for spiritual *meat* and *drink* uses the words *βρῶμα* and *πόμα*. But there is another passage, already quoted, which, I think, proves beyond question that the meat and drink by which His flesh was nourished and sustained are here meant. When Christ bids the disciples not to take anxious thought what they should eat, or what they should drink, or what they should put on, the soul, He says, is more than meat, and the body, the fleshly tabernacle of the soul (which is meat), is more than the raiment which covers *it*. His meaning here must be that His flesh and blood were of the substance of solid and liquid food; in other words, that they were of the dust of the earth; that as man He was in all things conformed to His brethren. This will be more evident if we compare the substance of this discourse, and that with Nicodemus, and with the woman of Samaria, with some passages in the writings of St. John and St. Paul which are evidently comments upon them. The doctrine

taught, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is *in His Son*, is to be found in every page of the New Testament, but nowhere so elaborated as in these discourses, and the expositions of these two apostles. In these expositions, whilst all that Christ teaches of the bread of life, the life from above of flesh and spirit, is, minutely dwelt upon, the only comment upon His words, that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood, is, that He took on Him our flesh. To eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood is a phrase nowhere used except in this sermon on the bread of life. If we add to this, that the flesh is here said to profit nothing, as giving life, the use that has been made of it by the Church does really appear a thing to wonder at.*

The introduction to the Gospel of St. John is an epitome of all that Christ taught on regeneration, the birth from above, or the bread from heaven. St. John ascribes all power to Christ in God, before all worlds, and in the creation of all things, as claimed by Christ in his conversation with Nicodemus; and almost quotes the words, in which Christ at the same time condemns the world for rejecting the light which was come unto it. 'In Him was life, and the life was the light of man; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not That was the true light which lighteth (kindleth the lamp of life in) every man that cometh into the world.' On this light St. John dwells chiefly in his epistles, and

very pointedly refers to the sermon on the bread of life : ' He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life ' (hath no life in him). Again and again he says ' Abide in Him,' and this Christ says is to eat His flesh ; of this St. John says nothing, unless he regards it as our being the same flesh and blood as Christ. ' Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.' So also in the prefatory verses of his Gospel : ' The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,' is the only comment on Christ's words, that we abide in Him, are one with Him, by partaking of His flesh and blood. The commencement of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews corresponds very closely with the introduction of St. John's Gospel ; and the connection with the discourses which we have been considering is even more pointed. He commences by ascribing, in very similar language, that power over all things created, which Christ claimed to Himself, as the life from above and the bread of life ; and after dwelling on the glory of the gospel proclaimed by Him, as compared with the law ordained through angels and Moses as the mediator of the covenant, and quoting David as saying, that God had made all the works of His hands subject to man, he says : ' Now we see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and

honour, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.' St. Paul then insists on the oneness between Christ and the children which God had given him, and adds : 'Forasmuch then as the children partook in common of flesh and blood, He also in the same manner partook of them, that He might by death abolish him that had the power of death, that is the devil. . . . Wherefore it behoved Him, in all things to be made like unto, or the same as, (ὁμοιωθῆναι), His brethren, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.' This exactly corresponds with a passage already quoted in illustration of St. Paul's doctrine of the death unto sin, in his Epistle to the Romans : 'There is therefore no condemnation for them, that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what it was impossible for the law to do, in that it is weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son, in the likeness, or under the same conditions, of the flesh of sin, and for sin, hath condemned sin in the flesh.' There is little in these passages to warrant the idea that the sinful flesh which Christ assumed, though He made it sinless, 'is our spiritual food and sustenance,' but we may well believe that St. Paul had in mind the words of our Saviour discoursing to Nicodemus of the flesh and of the Spirit. 'God sent not His Son into the world to

condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not, is condemned already ;' and that this is to the same purport as 'the bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' Doubtless the sacrifice of His body on the cross is here referred to, and that believers would live by His death ; but the theme of His discourse is, that He is and ever was 'the fountain of life.'

No one can fail to observe an abrupt change from the future to the present, in our Lord's language. He throughout promises that He *will give* the bread of life—will give His flesh ; but in reply to the incredulous sneer, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' He says, 'Unless ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye *have* no life in you.' There is no life but that which He gives, and He only gives it through the flesh which He created, and which He had then assumed, which was His in the counsel of God before all worlds—the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Christ's teaching is, that man cannot live without flesh and spirit, but that the spirit is the life, the light. As the light of the body is the eye, and when the eye is diseased the body is all darkness, so when *the light that is in us* is darkness, how much greater is that darkness ; if the life is death, how awful that

death—the death in sin. Regeneration St. Paul makes the resurrection from this death, which we can only affirm to have been perfected in Christ. Isaiah and St. John saw it perfected in heaven in those who ‘will hunger no more, neither thirst any more, nor will the sun light on them nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne will feed them, and will lead them unto living fountains of waters.’¹ As St. Paul declared all Christians baptized into the perfection of Christ, so He Himself says that all who are in Him will attain to this perfection. All difficulty is removed to those who take literally the promise, here so often repeated, that He will raise up—that is, to salvation—*all* at the last day ; but it is not irreconcilable with the sterner doctrine of everlasting punishment; the wicked, in another sense, have everlasting life. It cannot apply to all who are said to eat the bread of life at the Eucharist: our Church at least teaches, that many eat and drink their own damnation ; and if we restrict the promise to those who eat in faith, it seems quite superfluous, as it is made in innumerable instances without the condition of eating, which is attached to it on the authority of this simple passage. As regards this life, I can only suppose that to eat the bread of life is to live to Christ, to abide in Him. Bunsen, writing to a lady perplexed by

¹ Rev. vi. 16, 17, and Isaiah xlv. 10.

doubts, says : 'The way to eternal life, lies in eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ—that is, in merging our own selfishness in a course of life adopting and taking in His divine self-devotedness, in love to the brethren, in progressive self-renunciation.'

It appears to me impossible but that, if the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are the very flesh and blood of Christ and our spiritual food, He would have declared them so to be at the institution of that sacrament, and not have left His disciples to infer it from this conversation with the unbelieving Jews: still more impossible that had His disciples so understood Him, three out of the four Evangelists should not have recorded this conversation, nor any promise that the bread and wine were to strengthen and refresh our souls. Very good reasons may be given why St. John would be likely to recall these discourses, from among the many things which he says Jesus did and said which had not been written. He lived to see the birth of the heresy of Cerinthus; Irenæus, indeed, goes so far as to say that his Gospel was written expressly to refute it. The most prominent tenet in this heresy was a denial that Christ came in the flesh—maintaining that His divinity descended on Him at His baptism. Cerinthus held also that the world was not made by Christ, but by angelic agency. These two heresies are combated more directly by St. John than by any other

writer in the New Testament, unless it be St. Paul, who on these subjects may be looked upon as his commentator. In the passage from the beginning of the Hebrews, just quoted, he connects His glory as the Creator with His incarnation, and shows that these are quite apart from angels, whose nature He did not assume.

I propose to take only a very general review of the institution of the Lord's Supper. The truths revealed concerning it by our Lord and His apostles lie in a very small compass and offer little matter for criticism. My object in writing is not to expound, but to expose error, and this I should not attempt to do, did I not believe that I saw a more obvious interpretation of a particular passage and one more in harmony with the spirit of the gospel than that which I attempt to refute. The better to understand the meaning of our Lord's words in breaking the bread and distributing the cup at the Last Supper, we should well consider the occasion on which they were uttered. This is, I think, very much lost sight of in the formularies of our Church. In the Catechism there is no reference at all to the sacrament which that of the Lord's Supper superseded—the feast of the Pass-over; and in the Communion Service the only allusion to it, that I can recall, is the prefatory collect for Easter Day. Of late years I have often seen the Last Supper spoken of as the first celebration of the Eucharist. This has appeared to me something new, but for

taught I know, it may have been taught long ago, without my observing it; it certainly was not the idea that I had always entertained, nor do I see how it can be maintained. Christ and the apostles met expressly to eat the Passover—eating the unleavened bread and drinking of the cup, even singing the hymn, were all to be observed in its celebration. But, beside all this, the primary object of the new ordinance, that it was to be observed in remembrance of Christ's death, forbids us to entertain such an idea. The old covenant was not abolished by the death of the Covenanter. The Christian Passover was not sacrificed for us, as when St. Paul exhorted the Corinthian church to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

What, then, was the meaning of our Lord's words when breaking and distributing the paschal bread? He said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' In one sense, they were literally true; bread—that is, food—was the very substance of His body; and, doubtless, this is one of the blessed truths signified—that we are of the same flesh and blood with Him; 'we in Him and He in us;' as St. Paul says, 'We being many are one bread, one body, for we all partake of one bread.'¹ But this is not all that was signified by the bread; it was, He said, His body given for them (*broken* for them, as St.

¹ 1 Cor. x. 17.

Paul interprets Him)—then on the eve of being offered for the sins of the world. ‘The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.’ In neither instance can the reference to His death be mistaken, but there is no intimation that the bread which He gave to them at the Passover would give or sustain life; the future feast, like that which they were celebrating, was to be commemorative—to show forth His death; nor do I see how it is possible that the terms *My flesh* and *My body* can be synonymous, or that the twelve apostles could be told to eat His flesh in the same sense as the Jews were told they must eat it—to have life.

Wherever the words flesh and blood occur elsewhere in the new Testament, they mean, as they have always meant in ordinary discourse, *human nature*—the natural life; but can this be the meaning of the body and blood in the Eucharist? In a material sense the blood is as much a part of the body as the flesh or the bones. There is no stress, moreover, laid upon the act of eating or drinking to warrant the inference that any virtue is attached to it. St. Matthew only records that Christ commanded them to eat and drink; St. Mark says of the cup simply that He gave it to them and they drank, and St. Luke that He took bread and brake it and gave it to them saying, ‘*This do* in remembrance of Me.’ As regards the cup, the narrative of St. Luke differs somewhat from those of Matthew

and Mark. These two give Christ's words on delivering it, 'This is My blood of the new covenant;' whilst Luke has them, 'This is the new covenant in My blood;' and that the three mean the same is shown by St. Paul's taking the words as recorded by Luke. Now to say this cup is the sign of the new covenant, or of My blood of the new covenant, comes to the same thing. It is the sign of the new gospel covenant sealed by the blood of Christ, the Covenant of the old, by which that was annulled and the new established; but by what perversion of language could the disciples be said to drink the covenant, not then complete, or His blood, not then poured out? Doubtless St. Paul refers to these very words when he says Moses took the blood of bulls and goats, saying this is the blood of the covenant. The blood of sacrifice was a sign of Christ's death, as promised for the redemption of the world; the cup was to be a sign of the sacrifice completed—that the Son of Man had drained the cup which His heavenly Father had given Him.

It is not said, this bread is My body, *οὖτος*, but this thing, *τοῦτο*. It might be, without a violation of grammar, this cup is My blood, but not this wine. It is this thing—this that I do. No stress is laid upon one part of the sign or ordinance above another; it is taken as a whole: the blessing, or giving thanks—the eating—the drinking, all are comprised in the words *this do* in remembrance of Me. As a sign, all is intelligible;

but I cannot see how it is possible to reconcile the narrative with the idea that the whole mystery consists in eating the very flesh and drinking the very blood of Christ. I know that these words *this do* have been interpreted by the Romanizing section of our Church in support of the doctrine that the Eucharist is a sacrifice. I cannot say exactly what the argument is ; but it is, I suppose, thus alluded to by Dr. Arnold in a letter to Mr. Justice Coleridge. ‘The Newmanite interpretation of our Lord’s words, “Do this in remembrance of me,” you confess to have startled you. Surely it may well startle any man, for no Unitarian comment on the first chapter of St. John could possibly be more monstrous.’¹ The Greek word ποιεῖν here translated *do*, is more properly *make*, act or represent. It is constantly used in the New Testament for *making* a sign. In this sense it is used in a passage we have been considering. When, after the miracle of the loaves, the Jews came to Christ, He told them, that they did not understand the sign, and presently they said, ‘What sign, then, dost thou show or *make*?’ But there is another example nearer at hand. At the Last Supper, Christ made, or gave to His disciples, another very remarkable sign, in which He twice used the word in this sense. I allude to His act of condescension in washing His disciples’ feet. When

¹ *Life of Arnold*, vol. ii. p. 224.

Peter would not permit it, He said, 'What I *do* or signify, thou knowest not yet, but wilt know presently.' And when He had finished, He said to them all, 'Know ye what I have *done* or signified?' That this sign has not been observed in the celebration of the Last Supper is, I suppose, because it was only the preface to, not a part of, that which showed forth Christ's death. Had He concluded it with the words *this do*, there would have been no difficulty in understanding His meaning; and had the apostles *done this* in celebrating the Eucharistic feast, the Church would, in the words Christ used, bidding Peter participate in the sign, have had much more authority for attaching a miraculous spiritual virtue to the washing, than to the eating and drinking. For the latter there is not a vestige of authority in the institution, and to me the narrative is much more affecting and impressive, understanding simply, that the disciples were to do as He did, in remembrance of Him, to show forth His death, and their communion and fellowship with Him, and with each other, than it would have been had their Lord plainly declared that in so doing they would have spiritual strength miraculously imparted to them. Would not this be virtually to declare that without this supernatural aid, the one sacrifice was not full, perfect, and sufficient?

The idea that the living flesh and blood of the glorified Saviour is imparted in this sacrament, de-

stroys altogether the significance of the sign. It is His body, broken, lifeless, hanging on the cross, His blood poured out for us on the earth, of which it was intended to remind us. It is not a sign of life, but of the death of Christ ; as the miracle of the loaves and fishes was a sign that all life proceeds from Him, and by Him is regenerated. I know it is taught that the one sacrament gives spiritual life, and the other sustains it; but how can this distinction be maintained? 'Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, *ye have no life in you.*' He is the only source, as He is the only stay, of the spiritual life—the Spirit within us.

We have now to ascertain what is taught in the New Testament concerning the Lord's Supper by those who speak of it after its institution; and I think very little will be found to support the doctrine of a miraculous efficacy, or to identify it with eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ. Nowhere is any particular stress laid upon eating or drinking; frequently neither is mentioned; the predominant idea seeming to be that of *communion*, and this associated with one part of the sign, the *breaking* of bread. There is, indeed, good reason for believing that our Lord did twice distribute the bread sacramentally, after His resurrection, there being no mention of the cup. St. Luke records how, at Emmaus, 'As He sat (or reclined) with them, He took bread, and blessed it,

and brake, and gave to them . . . and they told how He was known of them in breaking of bread.'¹ St. John relates how, on His appearance at the Sea of Tiberias, He said to the disciples, on their coming to the shore, 'Come and dine (*ἀριστήσατε*) . . . Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.'² On neither occasion is it said that Jesus ate with His disciples. The almost incredible fact that He did eat and drink with them after His resurrection, affirmed by St. Luke, is liable to be suspected by those who, not regarding the sacred writers as infallible, think that verbal and circumstantial inaccuracies do not impair the credibility of their narratives. Luke professes to record some things which he had only heard from the report of eye-witnesses ; and there is, in what he writes on this matter, internal evidence that he confused two very remarkable incidents, so as to give neither accurately. The only occasion on which he says that Christ ate after His resurrection, was when He showed His hands and feet, and the food He ate is said to be a piece of *broiled fish* and honeycomb. The very words, too, which John says He used at the Sea of Galilee, are here given to Him, 'Have ye any meat?' Luke does not mention Thomas at all, but he was present at the Sea of Galilee, as St. John was also, and no doubt on both occasions ; Luke was

¹ Luke xxiv. 30-35.

² John xxi. 12, 13.

not at the Sea of Tiberias, and probably not at the other appearance of Christ's, so that if the two narratives are irreconcilable, as I think they are, we must correct Luke's by the fuller account of John.

I do not consider this digression irrelevant. The sacramental character of these two meals cannot but be felt, and if they were not sacramental, it is very difficult to understand what they were. Christ risen, presiding but not partaking, must have invested them with inconceivable solemnity. Whatever view we take of it, this appearance of our Lord to the seven disciples at the Sea of Tiberias is a very memorable event. It was a re-enacting of the miracle of the loaves and fishes—possibly on the very spot where He first performed it. This undoubtedly must induce the supposition that both are signs of Christ's feeding us with the bread of life, and this I have never questioned. Doubtless, the bread in the Lord's Supper is a sign of that bread we are taught to pray for day by day; and so was the bread in these miraculous acts, and the fishes also—or rather the whole miracle was a sign that He feeds us, as with natural, so with spiritual life. But it is never contended that the bread or fishes were His flesh: the lesson is, that it is through our partaking of His flesh, that He imparts to us His Spirit.

The notices of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the Acts and the Epistles are confined to two or three brief allusions in the former, and to the Epistles

of St. Paul. St. Luke on each occasion mentions it simply as *the breaking of bread*. 'They continued stedfastly in communion, and in breaking of bread;' 'Breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.'¹ At first the daily meal was made a sacramental communion, at which wine probably was not generally partaken of, the bread being specially the symbol of communion. When Luke again mentions this sacrament, the daily administration would seem to have been discontinued. At Troas, many years later, he says: 'Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples *came together to break bread*, Paul preached.'² Nothing more is said of the Lord's Supper in the Acts; the description he gives of the supper at Emmaus closely approaches it; and even in St. Paul's taking bread, and breaking it, 'giving thanks to God in the presence of them all,' when he assured the shipwrecked crew that they would be saved, there is more to remind us of it than in any other passage in his history of the apostolic Church.

St. Paul, I think, only mentions this sacrament, in his first Epistle to the church at Corinth; and he possibly might not have mentioned it at all, but for their gross and scandalous desecration of it. There is no direct mention of it in the Epistles of other

¹ Acts ii. 42-46.

² Acts xx. 7.

apostles. Regarding it as a daily or weekly commemorative service, as familiar to them as daily prayer, there is in this nothing remarkable; but if we suppose that it was then held to be the one channel through which Christ was communicated, or rather that it was Christ himself communicated to the soul, this silence appears indeed unaccountable. St. Paul's first notice of it is incidental. He is forbidding the Christian converts to partake of heathen sacrifices: 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of dæmons, or divinities of the heathen; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of dæmons.' The illustration which he uses precludes, I think, the possibility of his holding that they did at the Lord's table partake of the flesh and blood of Christ—that is, more than they did at all times. The conclusion he comes to is, that if they partook of their sacrifices, they would be in communion with the idolaters. 'Behold,' he says, 'Israel after the flesh; are not they which eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar?' If they, the Christians, partook of the victim on their altar, what need was there to go to the Jewish ritual for his example?

Before he thus impresses upon them that they cannot partake of the Lord's table, if they are partakers with idolaters, he makes a very plain statement of what the Lord's Table, or the Lord's Supper, is. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the commu-

nion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, for we are all partakers of one bread.'¹ This may be said to be the only explanation of what is signified by this sacrament by any of the inspired writers of the New Testament; and what support does it afford to the doctrine that in it our souls are strengthened and refreshed by the body and blood of Christ? The eating and drinking are not even mentioned: it is the cup which we *bless*; the bread which we *break*; and the one paramount idea is that of *communion*. The cup *is* the communion of Christ's blood; the bread *is* the communion of Christ's body—not the medium of communion, or the communicating of, but *the communion*. Our Lord at the institution speaks of *the cup*, which He gave to be passed from one to another and partaken of by each. And what does He say the cup is? According to Luke, 'This cup is *the new covenant* in my blood,' according to Matthew and Mark, 'My blood of the new covenant;' but as Paul quotes, 'is the covenant,' the two phrases must express the same thing. If so, how is it possible that the cup can be said to be *the blood*, *the covenant*, and *the communion* of the blood, in a literal sense? Take it as *the sign* of each, and all is clear and consistent. The cup is the sign of the covenant sealed

¹ 1 Cor. x. 16.

with the blood of Christ, into which we are admitted ; and the bread of our communion with Him and His members.

The word communion means the bond of mutual union. Thus, St. Paul, in showing how Christ was not ashamed to call men brethren and children, says: 'Forasmuch, then, as the children partook of, or were in the communion (κεκοινωνηκε) of flesh and blood, He also partook with them of the same.'¹ He partook of it, that He might, in it, fulfil to the letter all the requirements of the old covenant, and offering up a spotless sacrifice, might by the death of the Covenanter establish the new covenant of the gospel. The bread is a sign of the body, of the blood as much as of the flesh ; the one bread—the one body—the humanity of which we all naturally partake. 'For we, the many (οἱ πολλοί) are one body, for we are *all* partakers of one bread.' The cup, or the wine, is a sign that the blood of Christ's human body was poured forth for us. Being in communion with His body, we are in communion with His blood—with His death, we are baptized into His death.

Neither Christ, nor any writer of the New Testament, ever speaks of eating the *body* of Christ. Christ blessed the bread, brake it, and gave it to the apostles to eat, saying, This thing, all this, is My body ; this

¹ Heb. ii. 11 *et seq.*

thing do ye in remembrance of Me. St. Paul says, the bread broken in the Eucharist was the communion of the body of Christ; how then can it be said that we eat the body of Christ? Neither is it ever said that we drink the blood of Christ in connection with the Eucharist. The cup in Greek (*ποτήριον*) being neuter, the words *this* is my blood might mean this *cup*, without a violation of grammar, but not this *wine*. But even had the words been as they are misinterpreted, This bread is My body—eat this: this wine is My blood—drink this, the terms *body* and *blood* cannot be made co-extensive with *flesh* and *blood*. The body and flesh and blood mean the same thing; the blood regarded apart from the body means, as our Lord declared, the ‘blood *poured out* for many for the remission of sins.’

Assuming, then, that to eat the flesh of Christ is to partake of His human nature, I think there is no truth more plainly declared in the New Testament than this—that *all men* do naturally partake of it, are members of His body. ‘We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.’¹ St. Paul everywhere affirms this without the slightest reservation. ‘There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body ;’ and it is from being adopted into brotherhood with Christ in the former, that we are adopted into brotherhood in the latter. ‘By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.’² St. Paul argues that

¹ Eph. v. 30.

² 1 Cor. xii. 13.

as there are many members in our natural bodies, so are there many members in the spiritual body, the Church; but that there ought to be no schism. That he held all men to be members of the natural body, is placed beyond a doubt, when he demands of adulterers and whoremongers, ‘Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?’¹ If, then, to eat the flesh of Christ, is to partake of His human nature—as I have attempted to prove it must—the doctrine that we eat it in the Eucharist is a mere truism. The only medium by which we spiritually feed on Christ is faith.

The only other argument used to support the doctrine of eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ in the Eucharist which I think it necessary to meet, is what is called ‘the great peril of the unworthy receiving thereof.’ This has been made as fearful an engine of priestly power as the miraculous, soul-sustaining food, which it was taught the sacred order alone could impart. Whilst it has driven the conscientious and humble from the Lord’s table, it has enabled scoffers and unbelievers to take advantage of their religious scruples. Rebels swore to observe good faith to each other, ‘by the holy body of the Lord, which they now steadfastly look upon;’² and Popes and Emperors signed treaties ‘with a pen

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 15.

² Tyler’s *Memoirs of Henry V.* vol. i. p. 152.

dipped in the blood of the Saviour.' In this country, within the memory of many of us, to receive this sacrament was made a test of fitness for office—a safeguard that if unworthy men intruded, it was at the peril of their souls.¹ The damnatory powers ascribed to unworthy reception, are founded on a well-known passage in St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. As it stands in our version, it affords considerable support to the doctrine impugned, but I think I shall be able to show that it is not a fair translation. The crimes laid to their charge almost negative the possibility that the Corinthians had been taught to regard the elements in the light the Church

¹ I am here reminded of a circumstance which occurred nearly half a century ago, which is not without its moral. In a certain ancient and loyal borough, of which I am a burgess, some speculation was excited, whether a worthy member of the corporation would, on being made high bailiff, qualify in the usual way. He did, and immediately evidenced his fitness by giving his licence for inaugurating his accession with the long discontinued custom of bull-baiting. I myself saw the poor animal led through the streets ; but I believe he was not put to much torture, the burgesses having given up keeping bull-dogs. I was not then one of them, or, as a staunch Conservative, I should have been the last man to excuse the test. Afterwards, when Reform was staring us in the face, 'with a *not* great sum obtained I this freedom.' But it availed little: Reform came, and swept away all my privileges, by making residence a condition of exercising them. My first and last was my induction. Possibly in another half century, Conservative Churchmen will not be more frightened by the bugbear Reform, than Conservative statesmen appear to be now.

does now—indeed, St. Paul as much as says that they did not know what they were doing. This newly-founded church was then in a most degraded and demoralised state. St. Paul says he could not speak unto them as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, worldly men ; he says that there was iniquity amongst them, such as their heathen countrymen would not allow themselves to speak of, and that they were not humble, but puffed up ; and he warns them that it was worse than mockery to profess communion with Christ at His table, whilst they had communion with idolatrous sacrifice. It appears also that they had introduced the bacchanalian orgies of the heathen festivals into their Christian feast.

He then comes to the ordering of this holy table, and unless we bear in mind that he is speaking as a master to his disciples, and these very little enlightened in the principles of Christian truth which he is endeavouring to instil into them, his language will appear at once too arrogant and too flattering. ‘Brethren,’ he says, ‘be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now *I praise you*, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and observe the instructions which I gave you.’ Their offence must therefore have been more one of ignorance and infirmity than wilful transgression. After ordering that women should not appear unveiled in the congregation, he continues : ‘But in what I now come to speak unto

you, *I praise you not*—that ye meet together, not for the better, but for the worse. For, first of all, when ye meet together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you (quarrelling instead of communion), and I partly believe it ; for it is of necessity that there be heresies among you, that those who are approved (or to be regarded) may be made known. When then ye come together for this very purpose, it is not to eat *the Lord's Supper* ; for every one strives to be first to eat his own supper, and one is hungry, whilst another is drunken. What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in ? or despise ye and throw contempt upon the church (or the assemblies of the church), there being those that have none?¹ What shall I say unto you ? Shall I praise you in this ? I praise you not.' He then describes the institution of the sacrament, as he says he had before delivered it to them, and as he had received it of the Lord. He follows most closely the narrative of St. Luke, substituting, My body broken, for My body given; and repeating the words, This do in remembrance of Me, after the giving of the cup, which Luke (who only records them) puts after the breaking of the bread. I

¹ I am conscious that this interpretation must appear forced ; but I can make no sense in any other way. *That have not*, must, I think, mean *have not houses* ; but how they especially, or, as has been suggested, *they who had nothing*, were put to shame, I cannot see. I prefer making τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας the accusative absolute.

mention these variations only as evidence of the very slight support which the several narratives afford of the astounding effect attributed by the Church to the act of consecration. The terms *blessed* and *gave thanks*, which seem used indifferently, are the only foundation for it.

Having given the circumstances of the institution in detail, St. Paul thus arraigns their most sinful observance of it: 'Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' This is our translation, and perhaps it would not be easy to give a more literal one; but what is meant?—guilty of what? Certainly not of eating the body and blood—the grammatical construction will not admit of this. Is, then, any specific guilt here meant? I think not. As we have already seen,¹ *ἐνοχος*, here translated guilty, has not that meaning. It means bound by, and amenable to a compact or covenant, and the consequences of a breach of it. As St. James says the man who under the old covenant of works broke one commandment was amenable to the penalty of transgression, may it not be that St. Paul here means, that he who desecrates the Lord's table by sinful excess, is unworthy of the new covenant of the body and blood of Christ, which he professes to commemo-

¹ Ante, p. 50. Baptism.

rate? 'Let a man then,' he continues, 'consider himself (consider what he is and what he is doing), and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he that eateth or drinketh (at any time) unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment on himself, not recognising the Lord's body.' Forgetting, that is, that he is a member of Christ's body. St. Paul had, a little earlier in this letter, adduced this holy and mysterious bond to denounce the sin of fornication: 'Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot?'¹ If the sin were, not discerning the Lord's body *in the elements*, why does he say nothing of the blood? Was the desecration of that, less shocking and revolting? Again, if this were the sin that brought down judgment, how could the Corinthians be said to eat and drink the judgment? Say that gluttony and drunkenness brought it, and it is literally true. And St. Paul does say this very plainly: 'For this' (eating and drinking, not remembering that it is the Lord's body), 'many are weak and sickly among you, and many asleep.' The present Bishop of Lincoln in his note on this passage, asks: 'Who but an inspired writer could have ventured to assert this? Who would have dared to say that an epidemic disease was sent from

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 15.

heaven for a particular cause, unless he had been himself instructed to this effect by a revelation from God?' I trust the reader may doubt by this time whether St. Paul does say this, and that the conclusion of St. Paul's remonstrance will confirm his doubts. 'For did we *discern*, know ourselves, we should not be judged—visited with judgments.' The very same word *διακρίνομεν* is here used which just before is translated *discerning* the Lord's body ; and then, as if to show that he did not regard these judgments as sent to take vengeance on them, St. Paul adds, 'and even when we are judged we are chastened, taught as children what is good for us (*παιδευόμεθα*)—by the Lord, that we be not *condemned*¹ with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye meet together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto judgment (not for the worse, but for the better), and the rest will I set in order when I come.'

So far am I from any misgiving as to the dangerous tendency of teaching that the apostle does not recommend a course of self-examination before partaking of the Lord's Supper, but only bids a man remember that he is a member of the Lord's body, I am fully convinced that the exhortations of our Church to this effect tend greatly to perplex and to mislead, and to

¹ *κατακρίθωμεν*. This is the only word in the whole passage which expresses damnation.

lower the standard of Christian holiness. How difficult it must be for a man to satisfy himself that he is worthy to receive, is shown by the advice to confess and receive absolution if he cannot otherwise quiet his doubts. And what is there said to be required of those who receive which is not equally required of them at all times? Again, by taking up the judgments which St. Paul says follow upon excess, and applying them to this offence, the Church is betrayed into the lax teaching, that by communicating when under grievous sin, without repentance, we kindle God's wrath against us, and provoke Him to plague us with *divers diseases and sundry kinds of death*, as though grievous unrepented sin did not involve these and more dreadful consequences at all times.

I really know of no other arguments from Scripture which are adduced in support of the doctrine that the body and blood of Chrst are, verily and indeed, taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper, and that they are thereby spiritually strengthened and refreshed. It has, I believe, been attempted to show, that St. Paul quotes in his Epistles from some ancient liturgy, still extant, in which the doctrine of our Church, or, for aught I know, of the Romish Church on this sacrament, is fully developed. I have never seen anything of the kind in print, except a notice of such a suggestion by Mr. Plumptre, Professor of Divinity, King's College, London, in Smith's 'Bible

Dictionary.'¹ He thus speaks of it: 'To find, as a recent writer has done (*Christian Remembrancer* for April 1860), quotations from the liturgy of the Eastern Church in the Pauline Epistles, involves (ingeniously as the hypothesis is supported) assumptions too many and too bold to justify our acceptance of it.'

The view which I have taken of this sacrament will, I know, be denounced by all parties in our Church, as lowering the Holy Communion to the level of a Jewish ordinance—to be, in short, nothing more or less than the old exploded Zwinglian doctrine revived. How far this is true, I am incompetent to decide; but I should suppose that I do in the main follow the teaching of Zwingli, and from the little all that I have read of him, I am proud to find that I am following in his wake. He was one of the first, one of the most single-minded and consistent, of the Continental Reformers, and there is not a stain upon his character. He had been for years preaching against the corruptions of the Church before he heard of Luther, and in 1523, in a conference held at Zürich, he published a list of articles to be discussed, which contain all the main tenets which the Protestant Reformation affirmed. One of these is, 'The mass is not a sacrifice, but a commemoration of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.' I also read that, 'Together with a corporal and local

¹ Vol. ii. p. 143.

presence, he rejected all notion of a spiritual presence and graces.' The simplicity of his views of this sacrament contrast strongly with the vacillation of Luther, which ended, I believe, in the mystical doctrine of consubstantiation, which has no advantage over that of transubstantiation, except in being more unintelligible; it does not, moreover, meet the requirements of the interpretation put upon our Lord's words, 'This bread is my body.' It appears to me that those who maintain a real corporal presence must choose between consubstantiation and transubstantiation.

I was much struck lately, reading Mr. Hepworth Dixon's 'Tower of London,' by the account of the imprisonment of certain personages renowned in our history at the time of the Marian persecution—the Princess Elizabeth, the bishops Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, and Lady Jane Grey—as regards the view they took of this sacrament. Elizabeth, when questioned as to what the bread was after consecration, evaded a direct answer, saying, what Christ made it, that she received it. The bishops, though allowed to meet together, could not agree as to whether any or what change took place; but the Lady Jane, who maintained her opinions not only with courage and constancy, but with as much learning as the best divines, simply said, 'The bread is the symbol of the body of Christ.' She was, I suppose, a Zwinglian, and

if so, I am content to be so called likewise. Nor is this doctrine exploded : it is still held by the Reformed Churches on the Continent, which at first adopted it, and it would, I think, better become the Church of England to be seeking communion with them, and with non-conforming, or only nominally-conforming brethren at home, than with corrupt churches, from whose errors and superstitions she has professed for centuries to have withdrawn herself.

Whether the simple commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ, as the Lord commanded, simply because He commanded it, or the high ritual of a sacrificing priest, with sacrificial vestments and incense, approaches nearest to a Jewish ordinance, I commend to the reader's judgment. In one respect the former corresponds most closely with the Jewish sacrament, which was the type of the Christian. It puts in no claim to any beneficial influence as specially attached to the observance ; and unless eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, which He told the unbelieving Jews they did, and must do, be the same as blessing, breaking, and distributing among themselves the bread and wine which He commanded His followers to do, in holy communion and in remembrance of Him, there is no scriptural authority for the teaching of our Church that our souls are strengthened and refreshed by the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

I have now done with the two sacraments of the Church of England ; but I must be allowed to make a few remarks on a subject closely connected with the system—*the absolution and remission of sins*. We do not recognise the Romish sacrament of Penance, but it seems to me that we reject it only in name ; the thirty-third Article declares that persons excommunicated are to be regarded as heathens until they be openly reconciled by penance. I am not, however, going to dwell on the dark side of the ordinance ; my remarks will be directed against the power which is claimed by the priesthood of *declaring and pronouncing* the absolution and remission of sins, which is not, I think, warranted by any passage in the New Testament. None but a priest is allowed by the rubric to pronounce absolution, and the form of ordination of priests leaves us in no doubt whence the assumed power is supposed to be derived. These words are put into the mouth of the ordaining bishop : ‘ Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained.’ I forbear comment on this supposed possibility of one man conveying the Holy Spirit to another : the only question I raise is, whether any command is given to pronounce absolution or declare sins forgiven. John, who thus records Christ’s words, says they were spoken to the disciples ; Luke to *the eleven and those who were with them* ; whilst Matthew and

Mark say *to the eleven*. They evidently do not make it a matter of importance—nor is it; the question is, what is their meaning—what the commission given? The substance of what Christ said when He appeared to the apostles on the day of His resurrection was spoken on other occasions, and always joined to the command to preach the gospel of His kingdom. The commission to do this was, in the first instance, given to the apostles pre-eminently, but not exclusively, and we shall find that there is no exclusive power conveyed in these Christ's words.

They were first spoken to Peter—for I assume that to bind and loose is equivalent to remit and retain—at the same time his Master told him, that He would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven—words to the same effect. To the scribes and lawyers under the old dispensation were committed the keys of knowledge, and Christ denounced woe on them that they had not opened the door, and so in His command to bind or loose, or rather to loose and not bind, there is as much of warning as privilege imparted. In this spirit, St. Paul accepted it: 'Yea, woe is me, if I preach not the gospel.' The next occasion on which these words were spoken to His disciples, was when they were disputing amongst themselves which was the greatest. It is not likely that he would then feed their pride by conveying any exclusive spiritual power. There is here again some discrepancy in the narratives: Matthew and Luke

say they were addressed to the disciples, Mark to the twelve. They are doubtless in degree of universal application, though especially to those who are called to preach the gospel. We know how he reproved their pride by placing a poor child in the midst of them. On another occasion of the same unseemly contest, He reminded them that He was among them as a servant.¹ Let us examine the narrative as given in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, which is entirely devoted to the doctrine of the remission of sins. Some misapprehension is likely to arise from the circumstance that the same word is used for forgiveness or remission of sins against God as of sins against ourselves, and still farther, from our attaching a different sense to the term from that of the New Testament. Sin against God can only be put away by human agency by bringing men to Christ. To forgive our brother, Christ says, is to put away from our heart his trespass. He is only led to speak of the forgiveness of personal injuries by Peter's question, 'How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?' The theme on which He enlarges with such startling energy is the wickedness of offending, or leading astray, His little ones—the blessedness of bringing them into His fold. 'Whosoever,' He says, 'shall receive one such little child as this to My name (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου) receiveth Me.' This is more literally correct, and I think more

¹ Luke xxii. 24.

expressive than *in* My name.' A little further on He speaks of two or three gathered *into* His name (εἰς τὸ ἑμὸν ὄνομα), and in many other places where He uses the expression it is invariably *into*; 'as baptize into the Name.' In all cases that I recollect, this seems to me their meaning. *In* the Name is ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι (Acts iii. 6). 'It were better,' Christ continues, 'that a man were dead and cast into the sea, than that he offend one of these little ones that believe in Me'—better for himself, better for the world, than that he live only to sin and lead others astray. The denunciation is sufficiently awful, but not so calculated to induce despair, if we regard it as describing the immediate and necessary consequences of sin, as if understood to mean the eternal doom of those who so offend, as all do in degree. It must needs be that offences come, but not the less is the woe to him by whom the offence cometh. He is not said to be beyond the reach of salvation himself, nor shut out from the privilege of helping forward the salvation of others; but to him, as to all who would go on towards perfection, the mortification of the flesh is the prescribed condition. If thine eye or foot offend, cast them from thee: better to enter into life without them, than be thyself cast into hell by them. Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that their angels in heaven are always looking to the face of My Father which is in heaven. Now what-

ever reference there may be here to beings of a higher order than man (and, from what he says in the first chapter of Hebrews, I should suppose St. Paul thought they were referred to), there can, I think, be no doubt that God's angels or messengers in His kingdom of heaven on earth, who are always interceding for and striving to bring back those who go astray, are included in the description. To exemplify what He means, He gives the parable of the lost sheep. Surely the joy of him who carries back his lost sheep more closely corresponds with that of the messenger, or missionary, who brings back a soul to Christ than that of a spectator. But more, Christ gives directions how the messenger is to proceed. The Greek word translated *sin* means primarily to wander from the right path, and I cannot think that ἀμαρτήσῃ εἰς σέ, translated *sin against thee*, refers to wrong done by a brother to ourselves. In such a case our Lord tells Peter there is but one course to pursue—to forgive him as oft as he repents and asks forgiveness. This does not mean that we must submit to wrong, but must not bear malice. In the other case, which I suppose relates to sins in the sight of God, altogether different instructions are given how they are to be dealt with. If thy brother sin, or err in what relates to—is an offence or scandal to thee, go to him first alone and endeavour to convince him of his error. If he hear thee, thou hast gained—recovered thy brother; if not, take

one or two with thee, then lay his sin before the Church, and then, until he repent and seek to be received back, let him be to thee as the heathen. Then come the words, What ye bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and what ye loose on earth will be loosed in heaven, in the kingdom of heaven here and hereafter. To give them faith that they will loose and not bind, He adds, Again I say unto you, if two or three (the two or three who are directed to go to reclaim the sinner) shall agree to ask anything of My Father, it will so be: for where two or three are gathered into My name, there am I in the midst of them.¹

Here is a very full explanation of what is meant by binding and loosing, remitting and retaining. Something more, I think, is meant than pronouncing a form of absolution. There is, indeed, no such word as absolution in the New Testament, nor anything equivalent to it. The Scripture word translated to forgive, means to blot out—put away by substituting righteousness; the Church idea is to absolve from, or remit, the

¹ I make no doubt but that St. James expressly refers to this discourse in the last words of his epistle:—‘Brethren, if any one among you wanders from the truth, and another would turn him back; *let him remember* (γινώσκέτω) that he who turns a sinner from his way will save his soul alive, and cover the multitude of his sins.’ What he looses on earth will be loosed in heaven.

penalty. The inveterate habit of theology of isolating a passage, making it of private interpretation, and founding upon it a dogma or ordinance, has betrayed the Church into the impiety of assuming to herself the power to forgive sin, which belongs to God only, resting chiefly on the words of Christ, as recorded by St. John, on His first appearance to the eleven. Now if we place the four narratives of this event side by side, and compare the words which He spoke, we find that, with slight variation in expression, all agree in substance—that they perfectly harmonize with what He said before of His lost and wandering sheep, but that they convey no power to man to pardon sin. St. Matthew having recorded how Christ appeared to the women on their way from the sepulchre, and bade them tell His brethren to go into Galilee, says the eleven did go, and that when they themselves saw Him, they worshipped Him, *but some doubted*. This sufficiently proves identity with the other narratives. This is Matthew's account:—‘And Jesus drawing near to them said, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Wherever ye go therefore, proselytize all nations, baptizing men in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’ This is Mark's:—‘Wherever ye go through all the world, preach the gospel to every

creature. He that believeth and is baptized will be saved, and he that believeth not will be damned.' I have before suggested that Luke may have mixed up some other matters with his narrative, but as regards the words of Christ, it very accurately corresponds with the others. He says that Christ showed to them that it was foretold in the Scripture that all that had happened was to be, and there should be preached in His name repentance and remission of sins, to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem: And ye are witnesses of these things; and, behold, I commit to you the apostolic mission of My Father. Last comes John's version:—Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as My Father hath sent me, so send I you. And He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. This is substantially the very same as Mark's version—Whosoever believeth, &c.—and yet on his the Church has founded the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and on John's, that of priestly absolution and reprobation.

I am conscious of having been tediously minute in working out this subject, but I could see no better way of showing the unscriptural character of this part of the priestly system, than by endeavouring to read the text on which it mainly rests in its higher and more apostolical sense. It is a subject on which very

many who in other respects are admirers of our Church doctrines will agree with me that reform is needed, especially as the practice of private confession and absolution is being revived. The necessity thus involved of secret examination, has justly made it odious ; and, above and beyond this, arises the question, is not this assumption of spiritual power impious and presumptuous ? Jesus Christ Himself never uttered such words as are put into the mouth of the priest, in the office for the sick—‘*I absolve thee from all thy sins.*’ He said, indeed, that the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins ; and He evinced it by miraculously healing men and women of those afflictions which had brought them to the Saviour, frequently uttering at the same time the words, ‘Thy sins are put away. Sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee.’ He may have meant no more than that all sin is put away as soon as repented of—to have our sins put away and to sin no more being, in fact, the same thing. The Church idea of absolution has reference to future punishment, and penances were imposed to shorten, or mitigate, the torments incurred ; hence, absolution is most especially to be sought, as baptism once was under the same superstitious delusion, at the last hour, when to go and sin no more is no longer possible.

More authority may be found in the New Testament for excommunication and penance than for absolution ; but then it should be remembered that the apos-

tolic Church had no other way of inflicting punishment on offenders than by spiritual censures. Had the government been Christian, it would gladly have placed itself under its power and authority. In Saxon times there was one law for Church and State. It was not till about the time of Stephen that a distinction began to be made ; brought about by foreign prelates, and the practice of Rome in the spiritual courts. 'This,' Blackstone says, 'widened the breach between them (the spiritual and temporal courts), and made a coalition afterwards impracticable ; which probably would else have been effected at the general reformation of the Church.' The reader will find in the chapter from which this is quoted (c. 15, vol. iv.) some very caustic remarks on the iniquitous and venal administration of the ecclesiastical and penal laws. They are part and parcel of the sacerdotal system, and were framed chiefly for the protection of the sacred order ; and though they are no longer to be feared—though, if a priest break the law, he can no longer shelter himself behind the privileges of his order—the manner in which I have handled this subject will still be regarded by very many as profane secularizing. But if to search into the principles of eternal truth, otherwise than through the authorized sacramental and ritualistic channels, is to secularize, the alternative must be, to overlay each succeeding age with the effete superstitions of the past.

POSTSCRIPT.

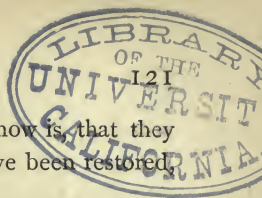
SINCE the above treatise was finished, the Church of Ireland has been disestablished, and the people of Ireland made aliens—aliens from the constitution as settled at the Reformation. Great numbers of them, who were before voluntarily separated from, and many within, the Church, who may have proclivities to Rome or America, will doubtless rejoice. What may be the feelings of those who were loyal to Church and State, who have been thus cast off, it is too late to consider. The Act is passed, and the Irish, as regards religion, are placed in much the same relationship to the State as the Queen's Hindoo and Mahomedan subjects in India. But this is not the worst aspect in which this revolution presents itself: a breach is made in the constitution of Great Britain. For the first time in her history, she has cast off religion as an element of government, and declared that she will rule Ireland without it. What is this but to deny the authority of the great Head of the Church, to Whom all power in heaven and in earth is committed? Mr. Gladstone has feelingly complained of such language as uncharitable; but this is, I think, unreasonable. No one

impugns his motives now, any more than when he advocated principles diametrically opposed to those on which this revolutionary Act is based; but those who think it a God-denying measure must not be deterred from so describing it for fear of hurting his feelings. There are those, too, who will presume to doubt whether the way in which he handled the subject, when he argued for the necessity of union between the Church and the State, was such as to bespeak confidence in him now that he insists on the necessity of dissolving that union.

One who, perhaps, was the greatest critic of the day—one who expressed unbounded admiration of its author, and who was not the less likely to be impartial because he was a foreigner, thus described the impression made upon him by Mr. Gladstone's book:—‘I wonder that Gladstone should not have the feeling of moving on an *inclined plane*, or that of sitting down among ruins as if he were settled in a well-stored house. The reason of these defects in his book I ascribe to the want of a deeper philosophy. It is the deficiency of the handling of ideas in this blessed island which makes it so difficult for your writers, political and ecclesiastical, to find the seeds of regeneration in your own old, blessed institutions—which, to preserve, you must reconstruct.’¹ Whatever Mr. Glad-

¹ *Memoirs of Bunsen*, vol. i. chap. viii.; Letter to John Hills, Esq.

Postscript.



stone's may be, the feeling of many now is, that they are sitting in a ruin, which might have been restored, and made a well-furnished house.

My object, however, in this postscript is not to indulge my spleen, but to show that this measure of disestablishment is the legitimate issue of those principles and doctrines of sacerdotal exclusiveness which I have been labouring to refute. I think this may be abundantly proved from that *Chapter of Autobiography* which Mr. Gladstone has given to the public. After a brief explanation of the principles and object of his work, *The State in its Relations with the Church*, he thus describes its reception:—‘Scarcely had my work issued from the press, when I became aware that there was no party, no section of a party, no individual person probably in the House of Commons, who was prepared to act upon it—I found myself the last man on a sinking ship.’ By the sinking ship, he must mean his own principles of Church and State, but the simile may well be applied to the present state of the Church—

‘O navis, referent in mare te novi
Fluctus? O! quid agis?’

He then recapitulates the principal political changes and events which have taken place since the publication of his book down to the present time; and how they conduced to the change in his opinions. The

sacrifices he made for them are most honourable to himself, and leave no doubt but that, however mistaken, he has acted throughout on the most conscientious and patriotic principles. Of the religious principles of his work he says nothing, but I think we may fairly conclude that disappointment at the abortive issue of extreme High Church teaching was not the least of the influences which led to his practically abandoning his theories. He gives a glowing description of the revival of the Church between the years 1830-40. 'These,' he says, 'were bright and happy days for the Church of England. She seemed, or seemed to seem as, a Church recalling the descriptions of Holy Writ: to be "beautiful as the sun which goeth forth in his might, and terrible as an army of banners."' (Judges iii. 31, and Cant. iv. 4.)

It would be superfluous to question the truth of this picture of the palmy days of the 'Oxford Tracts;' it was only what the Church seemed to seem, though supposed at the time to be a reality. 'Such a state of things,' Mr. Gladstone says, 'was eminently suited to act on impressible and sanguine minds. I, for one, formed a completely false estimate of what was about to happen, and believed that the Church of England, through the medium of a regenerate clergy and an intelligent and attached laity, would not only hold her ground, but would even in great part probably revive

the love and allegiance,' &c. &c. 'And surely,' he continues, 'it would have required either a deeply saturnine or a marvellously prophetic mind to foretell that, in ten or twelve more years, that powerful and distinguished generation of clergy would be broken up—that at least a moiety of the most gifted sons whom Oxford had reared for the service of the Church of England, would be hurling at her head the hottest bolts of the Vatican.' Mr. Gladstone could scarcely have been blind to the fact, that, at the time of this seeming resuscitation, men of less impressible and sanguine minds, not only foretold the secession of these gifted sons, but also that the principles then advocated would ultimately lead to the separation of Church and State;¹ the fulfilment of which prophecy he has now helped forward so effectively. I can come to no other conclusion than that disappointment at the issue of this apparent revival, and that his theory of the Church in its relations with the State found no supporters, greatly influenced him in his final resolution to cast off these relations as regards Ireland. The same influences will be brought to bear against maintaining a national Church in England, when her time shall come. Nor does his pamphlet warrant much confidence that this time will be far distant. He does, indeed, in conclusion, draw a comparison between an

¹ See Introduction, p. x

establishment which ought to be maintained—which we must suppose is intended for the Church in England—and one which he describes as having no such title to support, which he kindly advises to seek strength from within, when all from without shall be taken from it; but what hope does he hold out that the distinction which he draws will long continue? He speaks of the astonishment at the end of ten more years succeeding those he had described with such enthusiasm, with which he discovered, that though vast additions had been made to the number of churches, ‘the multiplication of chapels, among those not belonging to the Church of England, had been more rapid still. ‘English nonconformity (in general),’ he adds, ‘appears now to have founded itself on a principle of its own, which forbids the alliance of the civil power in religion in any particular form or forms. I do not embrace this principle.’ But he regards it as insuperable. Others may doubt whether the barrier has been raised by any principle on which Dissent has founded itself, or not rather by the dogmas and doctrines which the Church makes the only condition of conformity. Mr. Gladstone was once sanguine that the ‘Tracts for the Times’ would win over Dissent—he expresses no hope, nor even wish, that they may be reconciled by any other means. The sacerdotal system, which makes the effusion of the Holy Spirit dependent on ordinances, and limits the Christian ministry to those

who can trace their genealogy from the apostles by fleshly lineage, can recognise no such possibility. It may seek communion with corrupt Churches which profess to maintain the orthodox succession, but can only receive Dissenters on repentance, confessing that they and their fathers have gone astray wilfully. This is an impossibility, but it is not an answer to the question which I have raised, whether, if the people were in earnest in demanding it, the Church might not be made to embrace the Christianity of the State?

Mr. Gladstone's *Chapter of Autobiography* professes only to notice those opinions and events which conduced to his abandoning those principles as a statesman which he still retains as a Churchman ; otherwise, he might have spoken of one, not a whit behind any of Oxford's gifted sons whose names he holds up to fame, who, not only through the decade which he chronicles, but for many years before, was publishing, from time to time, pamphlets and papers on Church and State, on principles the opposite of his own, and telling aloud that the only means of safety for the Church was reform. He does, indeed, mention Dr. Arnold, but it is only as a great schoolmaster, who helped on the work of regeneration at this favoured period. It is true that Arnold's opinions on Church matters made little impression on the public, but this has been the case with other men during their lives, who have afterwards been acknowledged

as burning and shining lights. He was too honest and uncompromising to belong to any party, and even his friends seem on some points to have considered him impracticable. He was before the age ; yet, Too late ! too late ! was constantly the sad thought uppermost, and what has happened since has confirmed the presage. There was, too, a very general prejudice against him, on account of his radicalism in politics. Mr. Gladstone and many who were then opposed to him have since, in this, followed in his wake ; but there seems to be no drawing at present towards his ecclesiastical polity. It seems, indeed, wonderful to me how, in the late debates, his opinions were entirely overlooked. There was, indeed, at the last, an extraordinary revolution towards them, in the theory of concurrent endowment, started in the House of Lords, though too late : disestablishment had been conceded, which Arnold would sooner have cut off his right hand than have subscribed to. Such a solution of the difficulty was, perhaps, impracticable ; the *No Popery* cry was too formidable, and Mr. Gladstone and the House of Commons were pledged to the destructive principle.

But we must return to the 'Autobiography.' The theory which Mr. Gladstone ultimately adopted, though again he says, 'I own myself unable to accept it,' was, as I understand him, that of Paley—'government is police.' This was also the theory of the late

Archbishop Whately, Arnold's intimate friend, against which, in his letters to him, he repeatedly enters his protest. Mr. Gladstone says that Lord Macaulay fairly states the case when he says that, if in his book he has not proved his fundamental position, 'that the propagation of religious truth is one of the principal ends of government, as government, his system vanishes at once.' 'My ground,' Mr. Gladstone says, 'right or wrong, it matters not for the present purpose, was this. The Church of Ireland must be maintained for the benefit of the whole people of Ireland, and must be maintained as the truth, or it cannot be maintained at all.' He then argues that it does not teach the truth to the people of Ireland, and therefore must be abolished. He has, indeed, been bold enough to declare in the House of Commons, that he is doing no more in Ireland than William III. did in Scotland; but I think he would find it difficult to prove his precedent. William altered, but he did not disestablish, nor even disendow. According to the assumed infallibility of the Church, indeed, to alter is to destroy. He gives three propositions of Lord Macaulay's, which, he says, give a fair view of his 'philosophy of Church establishments.' The two first are to much the same purpose, that 'the primary end of government is a purely temporal end—the protection of the persons and property of men.' In the third, this principle is only a little more

elaborated, and, as it appears to me, the argument is not put in a very logical form. 'Government is not an institution for the propagation of religion, any more than St. George's Hospital is an institution for the propagation of religion. And the most absurd and pernicious consequences would follow if government should pursue as its primary end that which can never be more than its secondary end, though intrinsically more important than its primary end. But a government which considers the religious instruction of the people as a secondary end, and follows out that principle faithfully, will, we think, be likely to do much good and little harm.' To make the parallel complete, I think the proposition should have been, that government is no more an institution to teach religion as its primary object than it is to teach medicine. As Lord Macaulay makes the secondary object the most important, though Mr. Gladstone cannot, I feel confident that Dr. Arnold would have accepted this proposition unreservedly. Indeed, I doubt whether he would have admitted that it was an end of government to teach religion at all, not directly at least, any more than it is to teach medicine or law. I cannot see why Mr. Gladstone cannot accept it, except on the theory that the Church must infallibly teach the truth, as it ever has taught it, or teach nothing. Whether this was what Lord Macaulay calls his 'fundamental position,' I cannot tell, but this seems to be

the outcome of his argument—Although it ought to be an end of government to teach religion, it ought to teach nothing but the truth, and it ought to teach it to the majority of the people. The Irish Church does teach the truth, but as the majority of the people will not receive it, she must be disestablished and disendowed, and the government relieved of the responsibility of teaching religion at all. Now let us apply this argument to the parallel case just alluded to. It is an end of government to teach medicine, secondary of course in Lord Macaulay's view; it must give the people food before physic. For myself I do not see the necessity of this subordination of principle. One thing may be more urgent than another, but *principle* should be always right, always primary. But to proceed. Suppose it should come to pass, that the regular practice in our schools of medicine should become unpopular, that homœopathy, hydropathy, mesmerism, and other irregular modes of practice, should each have so many votaries that the allopathists are in a minority. Suppose, further, that some future popular prime minister should come to the conclusion that the teaching of the medical endowed schools is not founded on true principles, or, if it be, that the majority of the people will not have it. Following the precedent now being established, his course will be clear: he will disestablish and disendow all chartered schools of

medicine, hospitals, &c., and apply the funds which they hold in trust for the public to such purposes as Parliament shall determine. The same rule will apply to the courts of law, or to endowed schools of any kind. If found wanting, the foundations must be pulled down, there must be no reconstructing. Seriously speaking, I regard the supremacy of the crown—that is, of the State—as the same in religion, law, and medicine ; that the State is bound to maintain this supremacy over one as much as over the others. Not that it ought to teach, but to have authority and control, should foster and direct, and introduce such reforms and sanatory measures as the wisdom of the legislature may devise.

Nec meus hic sermo. Arnold and Bunsen advocated these principles, and though their principles have been cast to the winds, I see symptoms that public opinion is gradually veering round towards many of the practical conclusions at which they arrived. The late sudden and unexpected turning towards concurrent endowment I have already mentioned. Laymen are being invited to sit in diocesan church synods, though, I am sorry to say, that test of eligibility which the bull-baiting high-bailiff had to submit to, is sometimes proposed as a safeguard. But perhaps the most remarkable symptom, is a very general disposition to do away with ecclesiastical courts and ecclesiastical laws. These laws have indeed been so

amended and altered from time to time, that they may be, and are, made to bear heavily against all parties in the Church in turn, though originally framed to protect the persons and property of ecclesiastics. Nothing but the exclusiveness of the sacerdotal or Romish element in the Church has kept them alive so long.

The error lies in drawing a distinction between the spiritual and temporal functions of government—a distinction which cannot be maintained. All things that are seen on earth are temporal ; the spiritual is under other government than man's: temporal and spiritual, indeed, both under one divine Head, however man, or man's Acts of Parliament, may disown Him.

There is already scant evidence that government by the three estates is carried on on Christian principles. Nothing can be more unchristian than the spirit of party, and the grasping at the helm of power. Did all in power, whether high or low, remember always that the power is given to them from above, and that, *therefore*, because it is from above, not only those who abuse it, but those who put it from them, as did Herod, have the greater sin, its responsibility would be less coveted, its duties less evaded. The State, apparently without regarding it as a great sin, has cast off all religious responsibility in Ireland; it has no conscience, as a government—no consciousness whether the people

are Christians or heathens. It may, to use a simile of Mr. Gladstone's, do religion a kind office, if it do not interfere with its other functions—as a policeman may direct a passenger in the streets—but all other duties except those of police proper are the accidents of its existence ; religion is as much a private matter as to find the way from one street to another.

In Ireland then the Church difficulty is settled; nor does it seem probable that the time is far distant when England and Wales, and Scotland, will be emancipated, and all men, rich and poor, will have to choose and maintain, each for himself, a religion and a religious guide, or manage to do without either. The nonconformists boast that they are equal in numbers, if not in a majority, as compared with Churchmen; and this estimate is, I suppose, exclusive of the large and increasing body of Roman Catholics. In the Church, too, there is an influential party which is impatient of State control. In the principles of this party I believe the late revolutionary measure had its origin; and but for the support of this party, it never would have passed the House of Lords. An analysis of the debates and divisions, the silent votes and the votes withheld, will amply prove this. If the State will not maintain the sacramental or priestly system, it must not interfere with the Church. That which Arnold denounced as unscriptural and anti-Christian must be upheld, or there must be no national Church.

And when the Church is abolished, I suppose Mr. Gladstone fondly imagines that the rest of the constitution may hold together, though he must know that the majority of those who support him do not agree with him, and that many of them have republican tendencies. Before they fall into such a flattering illusion, let my readers well weigh the opinion of the venerable author of the *Natural History of Enthusiasm*, who once, I believe, stood in the ranks of the nonconformists, which I have before quoted, that when this high Anglican party, then represented by the *Tracts for the Times*, shall have effected the separation of Church and State, the House of Lords will soon be dispensed with, and then the ‘denuded throne.’ I have, in what I have written, attempted what Dr. Arnold could not have done without compromising himself—without putting away all power of doing good in that station in which God had placed him; and this, he repeatedly states in his letters, he religiously avoided. I have attempted to show that the sacramental system of our Church is unscriptural and superstitious, as he affirmed. I have no expectation that my feeble voice will be heard, but other voices are making themselves heard, some in a tone less friendly to the Church than mine, whose object is, in the words of Bunsen, to ‘find the seeds of regeneration in our own old blessed institutions, which, to preserve, we must reconstruct.’ The opportunity to attempt this will soon be past. One

honourable member of the House of Commons gave notice at the close of the last session, that he should in the next move the disestablishment of the Church in Wales; but, as a counterpoise, there was also the cheering announcement that another intends to bring in a bill for the reformation of the Church.

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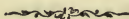
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